

## Safety Rules for Leading/Handling/Tying

### APPROACHING RULES:

1. Always wear your safety helmet when working around horses – especially when tacking, loading, and ALWAYS when riding. Sturdy boots with a one inch heel and protected ankle are needed for riding and recommended for barn wear.
2. Let the horse know that you are coming. Speak or whistle. Watch for an ear or look to acknowledge your presence. Use caution when approaching a pony whose butt is turned toward you; wait for your pony to turn and face you, or ask for help.
3. Approach the shoulder from an angle. The horse's blind spots are directly in front of his nose and directly behind him. That's where predators go and your pony is naturally skittish about these areas. Never stand directly in front or behind, even when grooming. Stand to the side where he can see you.
4. Walk and speak normally. Do not run or creep. Do not shout or whisper. Avoid sudden movements.

### HANDLING RULES:

1. While working with horses, stay close so that you would not receive the full force of a kick. The Kill Zone is 5 to 8 feet behind the horse. Twelve to 15 feet is a safety zone. Always keep an arm on your pony's back end when walking around him and try to keep your arm where it protects your rib cage.
2. Let your horse know what you intend to do before you do it. For example, when picking up a foot, run your hand down the leg first. If he knows that you are going to lift a foot, he also knows that you are not likely to do anything else, like attack or eat him.
3. Always keep a hand on the horse and talk to him so he doesn't forget where you are – or go to sleep only to be surprised by your touch later.
4. Try to do whatever you need to do around a horse as close to the shoulder as possible. He can still kick you, but it is more difficult.
5. Never reach for a horse's head or nose. You could scare the horse by having your hand suddenly enter his field of vision. If you must pet or brush his face, start at the shoulder and work forward. In the wild, one wolf goes for the nose while the rest of the pack goes for the kill.
6. Never kneel or sit around a horse. You need to be able to spring away if needed. Squat to put on bandages or wraps.
7. When cleaning feet, keep your own feet out of the area where he will put his foot down. He may spook and put it there before you expect it.

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8. It is always better to feed treats in a feeder or bucket. Never give treats by hand to a pushy horse.
9. Be calm and confident and work with no sudden movements or noises. A nervous, timid handler causes a wary, unsafe horse.
10. Never tease a horse.
11. Never ride or work alone in the arena. Always have a buddy or call in on a phone to let someone know that you are there.

### LEADING AND TURNOUT RULES:

1. Hold the lead rope about a foot from the halter with your right hand and have the rope or reins folded, not looped, in your left hand. Do not let it drag.
2. The horse should walk beside you, not in front or behind. The safest place for the handler is between his head and shoulder. Be vigilant. Any horse can bolt.
3. If a horse bolts, let him go. You can catch him later. Fingers do not grow back.
4. Hold your elbow out to protect your space. Make your pony respect your space, and mind you.
5. Never tie the lead rope to or around you. No joke, it's been done!
6. At gates and doors, command your horse to stop and wait for you to go first. The stall doors are not big enough for both of you.
7. When letting a horse go in the pasture, make him face you before unhaltering. If he bolts after being released, be sure to let an adult know so that he can be trained not to do it again.

### TYING RULES:

1. Tying or holding the pony's head provides the most safety when working around a horse.
2. Stay with a tied horse. If you cannot stay with him, do not tie him.

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3. Always tie with a quick-release knot that can be pulled loose even after the horse sits back. Ask for help if needed. Use a breakaway halter or tie the lead rope to a loop of baling twine so that your pony can break loose safely if it panics in an emergency.
4. Keep the knife in its place in the Utility Box at all times so that you can call an adult to cut a horse loose quickly in an emergency.
5. Tie so that the horse will not get tangled in the rope. Too much slack will allow a horse to get his leg tangled in the rope.
6. Never tie with bridle reins.
7. Always tie to something solid like a post.
8. Tie horses away from other horses and hazards that could cause them and the rope to become entangled, such as trees, branches, rocks, hoses, etc.
9. Tie only to a trailer that is hitched to a vehicle.
10. Never use long ropes to tie inside the trailer when moving. Use trailer ties if possible, none if not available.