

# Online HorseCollege



## **Student Workbook**

### **2.H.02 Handling**

[www.OnlineHorseCollege.com](http://www.OnlineHorseCollege.com)

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## ***Handling 2.H.02 Workbook***

Students are to complete Identification 2.H.01 assessment prior to attempting Handling 2.H.02.

Students are to follow all recommended safety considerations.

Practical assessments for Horse Care 2.H.02 are as follows

- Equipment/Gear
- Horse Behaviour
- Senses
- Catching and Releasing
- Tying up a Horse
- Picking out Hooves

These assessments incorporate the following unit from the SIS30710 Sport Industry Training Package which include the listed elements

SISOEQO201A Handle horses

- Identify and catch, control and lead a horse
- Assist with the transportation of horses

*Further information about this assessment is available at [www.training.gov.au](http://www.training.gov.au)*

## **Handling Introduction**

During your work and involvement with horses you will handle various horses of different ages, training backgrounds and temperaments. All these factors will influence how easy or how difficult a horse is to handle. The following pages outline what you can expect when handling horses and how to do so safely.

## Equipment/Gear

When handling horses you will use a variety of equipment depending upon the situation and horse.

Listed below are some items you may come across and what they are used for.

Used for leading and controlling quiet horses

**Web/Leather  
Halter/Head  
collar**



Used for leading and controlling quiet horses

**Rope  
Halter/Head  
collar**



Attaches to the halter for leading the horse

**Lead rope**



## Equipment/Gear (cont.)

Used to encourage a horse to go forward. Usually used during training on a lunge rein

**Lunging whip**



Protect the horses legs whilst travelling

**Travelling boots**



Applied to the legs for exercise or travel and to the tail to prevent rubbing during travel

**Bandages**



Applied to the upper lip on a horse to restraint. A twitch pinches the lip which releases endorphins.

**Twitch**





## Equipment/Gear (cont.)

### Anti-rearing bit

May be used to restraint stallions and difficult horses. Should be used with care



### Muzzles

Can be used for aggressive horses or stallions and also to restrict grazing



### Hobbles

Used to restrict movement. Can be applied to one leg, two legs or four legs.



### Small areas/yards

Small, separate yards are convenient for separating horses. Especially those that have an attachment to each other (i.e. mares and foals) as it allows an opportunity to handle one animal without having to worry about the other getting in the way.





## Horse Behaviour

There are many different factors that will affect or influence horse behaviour. The younger a horse is the less experience and knowledge they will have in certain situations where an older, more experienced/trained horse will be familiar and confident. The older, more experienced horses can be valuable to help train or calm the young, nervous horse especially during first outings at shows and competitions where there will be loud noises and unfamiliar sights and surroundings.

Another influence is hormones. As mares come into season during breeding times, stallions (and some mares) will become more difficult to handle.

Some external influences on behaviour are the weather. In hotter weather a horse will have less energy. During winter, a horse which is clipped will often have more energy. Other animals such as unfamiliar dogs or even cattle or alpacas will cause a change in behaviour. Especially if the horse has never come across that particular animal before. If the animal is unfamiliar to the horse it may regard it as a predator and this can be the case for unfamiliar people.

The following are examples of common horse behaviour.

### Kicking

When the horse lashes out with either one or both the hind legs.



### Striking

Horse lashes out with either one or both front legs.



### Following up

When a horse follows a person or horse that is higher up in the pecking order than itself. A natural behaviour



## Horse Behaviour (cont.)

### Biting

A sign of aggression where a horse will bare its teeth then close them around another object



### Shying/Spooking

Where a horse lacks confidence in their surrounding or a particular object often causing it to move quickly sideways.



### Easy to load

When a horse confidently walks onto a trailer for travelling.



### Ears laid back

A fearful, aggressive or unhappy horse. The ears will be laid back onto the neck



### Grooming

Horses in a herd situation will often groom each other.



## Horse Behaviour (cont.)

**Rearing** Used to assert dominance or as an expression of aggression, fear, nervousness, excitement or during play.



**Bucking** An expression of fear, nervousness, excitement or during play.



Within a herd situation there is a natural order known as the 'Pecking Order' where horses determine who is the most dominant horse (the boss) to the least dominant horse. To determine this order horses may exhibit behaviours like biting, kicking, striking and chasing other horses around.

Once this order has been established horses which are higher up in the pecking order will access food or water before horses in a lower position, often chasing the lower horses away from feed during feeding times. It is important to ensure when feeding horses in a group or herd situation that feed is spaced out and there are more feed rations than horses to ensure everyone gets a chance to eat.

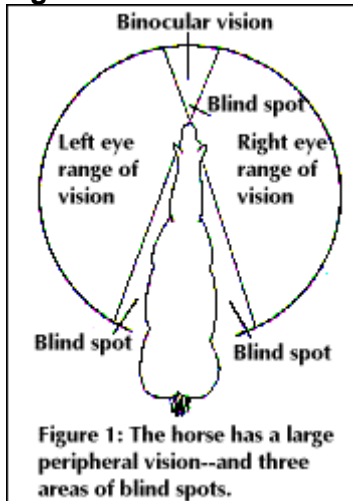
For this reason it is unwise to take feed to help catch a horse in a group situation. More than likely it will put you into an unsafe situation where you are in the middle of horses re-asserting their position in the pecking order.



## Senses

Horses have the same 5 sensory systems as us, sight, touch, taste, hearing and smell but with some important differences.

### Sight



Horses have peripheral vision meaning the majority of their vision is out to the side. Because of how their eyes are positioned on their head horses can see along the side of their body but not directly in front or behind them. This is why it's important that when you approach a horse you do so side on so you're in their line of vision. This is the primary detector of danger.

### Touch



The most sensitive areas on a horse are the eyes, nose, lips, ears and flank. For example of the sensitivity of this sense, a horse can detect a fly anywhere on its body and chase it off with a flick of the tail. This is the primary tool for communication between horse and handler/rider.

### Taste



Like people horses will prefer the taste of some feed. Some fussy horses will sift out the desired feed and leave that which it doesn't like in the bottom of the feed bin and often with incredible accuracy. This is the case for medications mixed in feeds also. Sometimes molasses can be useful in disguising medications.

### Hearing



Horses can rotate their ears 180 degrees. This allows them to isolate the direction the sound is coming from. Because of this ability the handler/rider can easily see where the horses' focus is. Their hearing is sensitive, loud noises will usually put horses into a "flight" reaction where they will run away.

## Senses (cont.)

### Smell



Horses use smell not just only to identify food but also when greeting new horses. A mare will use her sense of smell to identify her foal. A stallion can detect when a mare is in season. Horses may also use what is known as the “flehmen” response to smell. In this behaviour the horse curls up the upper lip exposing the teeth. By doing this the horse exposes the smell to a sensitive organ in the roof of the mouth to better determine the smell.



## Catching & Releasing

Before handling a horse its best to find out some basic information about it, for example, age, basic description for identifying, does it have any vices.

Once the appropriate information is sort, using a halter and lead rope approach the horse from the side, preferably the left or near side, walking towards the neck and shoulder region as this is the best place the horse can see you and the most appropriate place being that you're going to put a halter on.

Patting the horse on the shoulder slide your hand up to its neck and slide the lead rope around the neck.

Place the head collar/halter on the horses' head and ensure it is fitted appropriately with all the buckles (or knots if using a rope halter/head collar) done up.

Lead the horse away and remember to close the gate behind you especially is there are other horses in the paddock.

When releasing a horse into its own paddock (no other horses) lead it into the paddock, closing the gate behind you. Turn the horse to face the gate. Slide the lead rope around its neck and remove the halter/head collar. Pat the horse on the shoulder then remove the lead rope from the neck.

When you are releasing numerous horses into the same paddock on your own, make sure the previous horse you've released has moved away from the gate before releasing the next horse.

If there are numerous people releasing horses into the same paddock at the same time. Once all are inside the paddock with the gate closed, all handlers need to turn their horses towards the gate and for safety should be spaced out so there is about 2-3 horse distances between them. Then all the halters/head collars and lead ropes are removed at the same time. The reason behind this is safety. By releasing them all simultaneously it reduces the risk that a freed horse will come and cause an unsafe situation with a horse that is yet to be released.

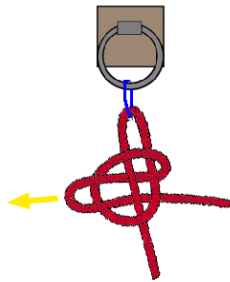




## Tying up a Horse

You should always tie your horse with a quick release knot to a pole or post rather than a rail, as rails break very easily. Tying horses to a piece of baling twine/string which is around the post means if the horse pulls back it will break the string not the post, minimising injury as well.

### How to Tie a Quick Release Knot



- a) Loop the end of the rope around the post/thru the twine. So that there is about 30-40cm of rope from the post to the horse.
- b) With the end of the rope, make a loop over the end which connects to the horse, keeping it close to the post
- c) Then make another loop in the end and past that thru the first & pull so that both loops pull tight around the horse end of the rope.
- d) To untie, simply pull on the end of the lead rope.

Using a quick release knot allows you to untie the horse quickly, by simply pulling the end of the rope, should a situation arise where for safety it is better to release the horse from being tied up.

It is important to never use the rein of the bridle to tie a horse up. This is because if a situation arises where the horse tries to pull back to get away it will do serious damage and injury to its mouth.

## Picking out hooves

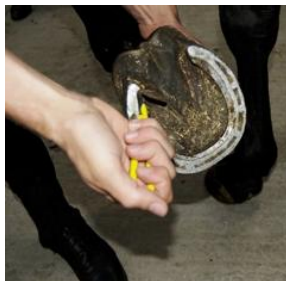
Regularly cleaning the horses feet is important as often stones or small sticks will become wedged in them, particularly if the horse is wearing shoes. Its also important as cleaning the hooves will allow you to check for any injury or conditions in this area.

In the event of a horse that is difficult to handle when picking up its legs, you can have a second person hold the horse so that it is flexed (slightly looking) towards the difficult leg or push the shoulder/hip away from you so that you shifted the horse slightly off balance.

### Front legs:-

When picking a front hoof stand beside the horses' shoulder, facing the hindquarters. Pat the shoulder and run your hand down the back of the horses' leg. As you reach the fetlock slide your hand to the inside of the leg and apply a gentle but firm pressure to the back of the fetlock in an upwards, pulling motion. Alternatively you can gently squeeze the tendons at the back of the leg. Whist doing this use your shoulder to help push the horses' weight off the leg.

Once the hoof is off the ground support it with your and by holding around the pastern/coronet region of the leg. With the hoof pick in your other hand, clean the hoof starting at the heel and picking away from you to the toe. Then place the hoof gently onto the ground, do not merely drop the hoof when you're finished.



### Back legs:-

The procedure is the same for hind legs but once the hoof is off the ground it is necessary to bring the hoof/leg back a little behind the horse so you can see what you are doing. Be careful not to bring the leg so far back that it the horse has trouble keeping its balance. Because the hind legs are much heavier than the front (and many horse will tend to lean on you when a hind leg is picked up.) it may be easier to rest the cannon bone on your knee, still supporting the hoof with a hand, whilst you pick out the hoof.

When finished bring the leg back under the horses' body and place the hoof gently on the ground.

## Extension Lesson

In each workbook you will find an extension lesson. These extension lessons are for you to utilise to help you understand and put into practice the knowledge covered in the workbook. They do not form part of your assessment (and unlike the quizzes we do not require you to send them in) however we do recommend that they be completed.

Using a suitable horse, practice the following

- Putting on and adjusting halters to different horses
- Putting on float boots to the front and hind legs
- Approaching and catching a horse, safely
- Releasing a horse safely

Over the next week observe and record a horses behaviour.

Day .....

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Name of horse   |  |
| Age   |  |
| Sex   |  |
| Weather conditions  |  |
| Behaviour exhibited<br>(i.e. rearing, kicking, biting, ears back etc) |  |

## Recommended Reading

The Complete Horse Care Manual- Colin Vogel

Horse Sense (The Australian guide to horse husbandry)- Peter Huntington and Fran Cleland

Pony Club manual No.2- Elaine Knox Thompson and Suzanne Dickens

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