



A Guide to Bad Horsemanship

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There are a few things that should be the bedrock of every program, from the seasoned trainer to the expert groom to the first-time Pony Clubber or Saturday school-string kid. Some things must always be done, and some things must never be done!

Leading a horse without a shank: If you lead your horse around without a lead shank and your horse suddenly pulls back, not only will your horse now be loose, which can lead to tragedy, but you may have just had your shoulder yanked out of its socket! Why take the risk? It is common sense that every stall in a barn should have a halter and shank on its door (morbidly referred to as “fire halters”). If there isn’t one on a stall door, go get one!

Letting a horse walk ahead of you into its stall:

From the very beginning we train horses to walk beside us, NEVER ahead of us! And for good reason, it is dangerous! Which leads us to.....

Letting the horse go before turning him around in the paddock:

This is just crazy! This one needs no explanation, but... HOOF → HEAD

And yet it seems to happen all the time. You can never place a high enough value on horse and human safety.

Bad bandaging:

Danger! Danger! How to bandage a horse properly is a whole other article, but please take the time to learn how to wrap correctly. Don’t use thin, used up, wrinkly cottons (throw out those old ‘no-bows’ and pick up a new set). If you aren’t sure how to wrap, look after your horse well and have someone experienced and knowledgeable teach you to do it first. The harm done by bad bandaging is preventable and is never worth saving the time it takes to ask someone for advice.

Looped chain shanks:

I am sad to report I have seen, more than once, a person nonchalantly grazing their horse with the chain shank looped back onto itself and the horse put his foot thru it. The outcome was not pretty. Always affix the chain properly or use a shank with no chain.

Nylon halters:

If nothing else, splurge on leather (preferably with a name plate so everyone knows who owns it!) If your horse ever gets into serious trouble while wearing a halter, leather will break and set the horse free of any dire circumstance, but nylon will not break and can do serious irreparable damage. Please don’t take this lightly!

Our list of Must Not Do’s could go on forever, but the bottom line is this: our horses are sensitive 1200lb animals, they deserve our best care but we must never forget their power.