

Placing a Headcollar



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- Each booklet illustrates one way to perform a skill and it is acknowledged that there are often other approaches. Before using the booklets students should check with their university or college whether the approach illustrated is acceptable in their context or whether an alternative method should be used.
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Year Group: BVSc1 +



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Equipment list: Placing a Headcollar

Equipment for this station:

- Model horse
- Headcollar

Considerations for this station:

- Applying a headcollar to a model before practising on a horse or pony will enable you to become familiar with the equipment and its correct use and application.
- There are useful equine skills lists and 'How to' videos on Blackboard that demonstrate this technique as well as other skills. These can be found in the Animal Management 1 section → eLearning and then navigate to the relevant documents & videos.
- Once you are confident applying a headcollar to the model, visit the Live Anatomy Barn to practise on a pony.

Anyone working in the Clinical Skills Lab must read the 'CSL_I01 Induction' and agree to abide by the 'CSL_I00 House Rules' & 'CSL_I02 Lab Area Rules'

Please inform a member of staff if equipment is damaged or about to run out.

The Headcollar

Headpiece (or crownpiece) – placed over the horse's poll, behind its ears

Buckle – used to adjust the size of the headcollar and fasten the headcollar



Cheekpieces – connect the noseband and headpiece; are placed either side of the horse's face

Noseband – placed over the horse's nose

Lead rope - attached (clipped) to a ring on the head collar (under the chin)





Clinical Skills: Placing a Headcollar



1

Before entering the stable, orientate the headcollar and make sure it is not fastened (i.e. the buckle is undone) so that it is ready to be placed on the horse. Check that the lead rope is attached.



2

Make the horse aware of your presence and then slowly and calmly approach on the near side (horse's left). Consider holding out the palm of your hand to let the horse sniff you. Slowly move closer towards the head/shoulder region.



3

Stand next to the horse near the shoulder and prepare to apply the headcollar.

N.B. The convention is to approach a horse on its left or 'near' side; it is also the side the headcollar fastens.



4

First, pass the lead rope around the horse's neck (up the far side, over the crest and down the near side); the free end will then be on the same side of the horse as you are standing.

N.B. Having the lead rope around the horse's neck allows for some level of restraint.



5

Place the noseband over the horse's nose.

It may also be helpful to put your hand on top of the horse's nose to help stabilise the head.



6

Pull both cheekpieces up towards the ears and pass the headpiece (crownpiece) over the horse's head, behind the ears (from the far side to the near side). Fasten the headcollar using the buckle.

Check the head collar is fitted to a suitable tightness (too tight may rub, too loose may come off); adjust if required.



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Resetting the station: Placing a Headcollar

1. Remove the headcollar from the horse
2. Place the headcollar onto a headcollar hook

Station ready for the next person:



Please inform a member of staff if equipment is damaged or about to run out.



I wish I'd known: Placing a Headcollar

- Many horses are used to having a headcollar fitted and will stand still whilst you place it. However, some may be head shy and lift their head up, making it harder to put the headcollar on. In these cases remain calm and be patient – ensure the horse is aware of what you are doing and try to provide reassurance. It may be helpful to put your hand over the horse's nose to help stabilise the head.
- Always be careful around horses – some may kick, bite or barge past you. Always be aware of where you are standing, and be careful not to startle the horse.
- Wear suitable personal protective equipment (PPE) when working with horses e.g. safety boots and a hard hat.
- Approach a horse from the near side (the horse's left); this is an equine convention and therefore horses are used to such an approach.
- When moving around the horse, do not walk under the horse's neck when changing sides and never walk behind the horse – this is dangerous.
- If tying up a horse use a quick release knot (see 'CSL_F00 Putting on a Halter' for illustrations and instructions about tying a quick release knot). Also avoid tying to a fixed point e.g. a metal ring, in case the horse pulls backwards suddenly (e.g. if startled); instead tie to something that would break under pressure (e.g. a piece of string through the ring) or use one of the commercially available products that has a quick release mechanism.