

# Using a Cattle Crush



## Disclaimer

A series of booklets has been developed by the Clinical Skills Lab team (staff, recent graduates and students) from the School of Veterinary Sciences, University of Bristol, UK. Please note:

- 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: BVSc 1+



# Equipment list: Using a Cattle Crush

Equipment for this station:

- Cattle crush
- Cow model on wheels

*N.B. A specific model cow has been designed to fit into the crush used in the CSL.*



Considerations for this station:

- This booklet describes how to use the crush that is in the CSL.
- Cattle crushes vary in design. When on farm, use the approach described in this booklet and ask the vet/farmer for specific instruction on how to use the on-farm crush.
- When using the CSL cow model and crush, there are several safety considerations:
  - When pushing the model cow into the crush keep your hands on the horizontal bar and not on the sides.
  - Do not walk into the crush. Remove the model cow backwards (through back gate), not through the front gate.

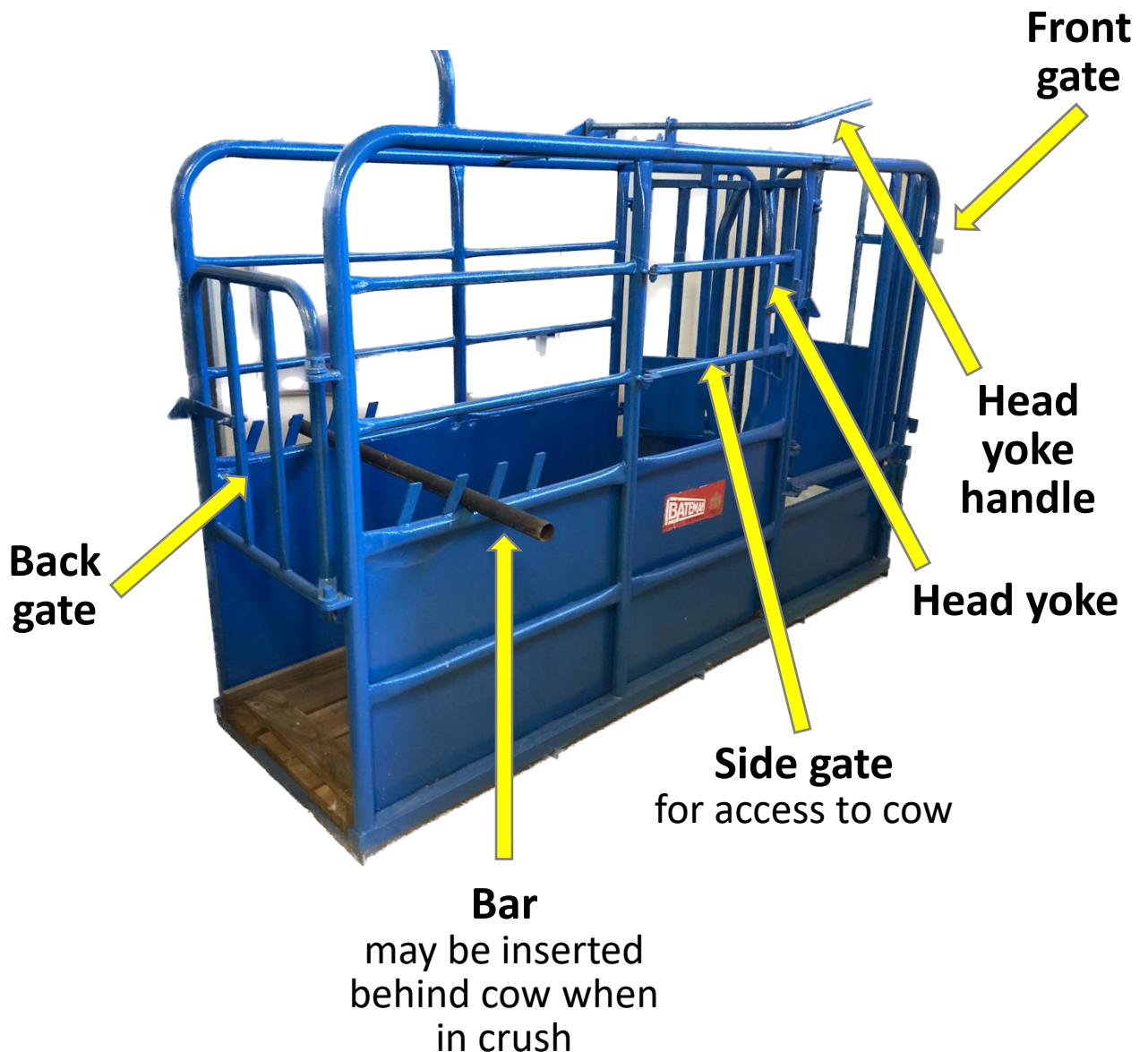
Anyone working in the Clinical Skills Lab must read the 'CSL\_I01 Induction' and agree to abide by the 'CSL\_I00 House Rules' & 'CSL\_I02 Lab Area Rules'

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



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# Parts of a Cattle Crush



*Note: The design of cattle crushes varies.  
The above photo is the one used in the clinical skills lab.*





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# Clinical Skills: Using a Cattle Crush



1 Check the crush is ready for the cow to enter.

Make sure the front gate is closed, with the latches fully over the catches.

*Note: Sometimes it may be necessary to open the front gate to encourage a cautious cow into the crush.*



2 The head yolk is set to the open position by pulling the head yoke handle backwards.



3 Open the back gate by lifting the latch and pulling the gate outwards.

## Work in pairs:

- One person will operate the crush.
- One person will push the model cow into the crush.



4 The person operating the crush should stand to the side, away from the crush, as the cow approaches.

The other person pushes the model cow forward towards, and then into the crush.

*Note: When pushing the cow model into the crush keep your hands on the horizontal bar at the back of the model, do not put your hands to the side.*



5 When the cow is fully in the crush, close the back gate behind her. When doing this, keep your hands away from the latch and stand to the side, in case the cow reverses out of the crush or kicks backwards. Make sure the latch is secure i.e. fully over the catch.



6 Close the yoke around the cow's neck by pushing the yoke handle forwards.

If the cow is too far forward in the crush, the yoke will not close as it will be over the shoulders.

If the cow is too far back, push her forwards until in the correct position for the yoke to close around the neck.



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# Clinical Skills: Using a Cattle Crush



The cow is restrained in the crush ready for examination, injecting, testing, etc.

*Note: When using the model and crush in the CSL, **do not walk into the crush**. The model cow will be removed backwards - see instructions on next page.*



Continue with steps 8, 9 and 10 with the model cow.  
Before releasing the cow from the crush, make sure no one is standing in front in the way.



Stand to the latch/handle side of the front gate i.e., on the opposite side to the hinges.  
Lift the handle of the gate and push the gate away from yourself.



Then release the cow from the head yoke by pulling the yoke handle backwards.

*This is the end of the skill in the CSL.*

On farm, if the cow is pushing forward onto the head yoke it may be difficult to release the yoke. Try to encourage the cow to move back a bit to ease the pressure on the yoke.



On farm, the cow would then move forwards and walk out of the front of the crush.

Stand back and away from the front of the crush as the cow exits the crush.



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# Resetting the station: Using a Cattle Crush

1. Remove the model cow from the crush:
  - The model cow is removed **backwards** i.e., through the back gate, **not** through the front gate.
  - Open the yoke (if not already open).
  - Open the back gate.
  - Pull the model out of the crush backwards.
  - **Do not walk into the crush**, this is to avoid the risk of hitting your head on the top of the crush.
2. Close the back gate.
3. Close the front gate.

*Station ready for the next person:*



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





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## I wish I'd known: Using a Cattle Crush

- Cows can kick, move and throw their head around. Be careful where you put your hands and arms when working with a cow in a crush.
- DO NOT put your arm/hand between the cow and any part of the crush.



- The design of cattle crushes varies. Familiarise yourself with a crush before trying to use it. DO NOT attempt to use a crush you have not been instructed to use.
- For more information about different methods of restraining cattle, see the following video:
  - [Cattle restraint methods](#)