

How to Fit a Halter

Halters are available in the same sizes as bridles: pony, cob, full (sometimes called average horse) and oversize (sometimes called large horse). Draft size halters are available from specialty suppliers.

Some halter manufacturers provide weight guidelines on their packaging labels to help you determine the size in their halter line that is most appropriate for your horse. In general, if your horse requires a full size bridle, he'll also require a full size halter.



Some challenges may exist based on your horse's conformation. For example, if your horse has a very narrow head, you may need to try halters from several manufacturers to find the correct fit, or purchase a cob size halter to achieve a snug enough fit. In this instance, you'd need to be sure that the cheek pieces are long enough to accommodate the length of the horse's face.

To fit your horse's halter properly:

1 Adjust the crownpiece, which will impact the placement of the noseband, the looseness of the throatlatch, and the angle of the cheek pieces against your horse's face. The crownpiece should fit over the horse's poll, close to the back of the horse's ears, but not press into them. Some halters have buckles on both

sides of the crownpiece, and some have only one buckle on the left side. In the case of two buckles, try to use symmetrical holes for the crownpiece setting.

2 Check the noseband portion of the halter. It should sit about halfway between the horse's eyes and nostrils, lying under the horse's cheekbones so that the hardware joining the nose piece, chin strap and cheek piece does not press into the horse's cheek bone.

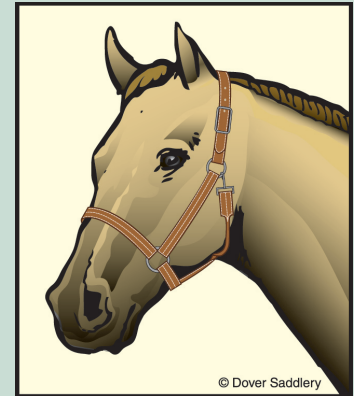
The noseband must be adjusted snugly enough that the horse cannot get a foot or another object caught in it, but loosely enough that he can open his mouth, chew and breathe freely. Use two to three fingers' width between the noseband and your horse's face as a guideline. Some nosebands do not have buckles for adjustment. If this is the case of your halter, take extra care to be sure that you can obtain the optimum position of the noseband by raising or lowering the crownpiece with buckle, and that the noseband isn't too loose or too tight.

If the cheek pieces are too long or the crownpiece is adjusted too loosely, the noseband will sit too low on the horse's muzzle. In this case, it may impair the horse's breathing or in extreme cases, slip over the horse's nose.

3 Check the throatlatch, which should rest under the head where the neck meets the jowls. You should be able to fit three to four fingers into the throatlatch area to be sure that he can breathe and swallow, but this spacing will not enable your horse to get a foot caught in that strap if he lowers his head.

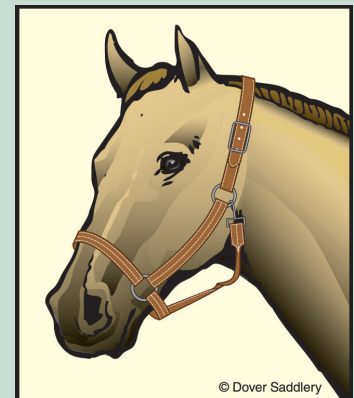
4 Check the cheek pieces. Ideally, they should sit parallel to the cheek bones. If the throatlatch is too short or too long, or the crownpiece is not adjusted correctly, then the cheek pieces will not be able to run parallel to the cheek bones.

Properly Fitted Halter



The horse can open his mouth and chew, and the straps are positioned in comfortable locations. The halter is not so loose that when being handled, buckles or rings could slip into the horse's eyes.

Poorly Fitted Halter



The horse could get a foot or other object caught in the loose straps. The halter will slip if the horse acts up while being handled with this halter.

Related Topic Types of Halters

For more assistance or to request a catalog, call 1-800-989-1500 to speak with a Dover Saddlery product advisor, or stop by any of our retail stores.

Visit DoverSaddlery.com for a complete store listing and full product offering

Fitting Tip

Because leather can stretch slightly with time and conditioning, check the fit of your leather halter periodically to be sure it hasn't become too loose. Make any necessary adjustment to your halter settings to maintain a proper fit.