

# Safety First

By Helping Hands Horsemanship

Our safety and our horse's safety is the number one thing that needs to be considered when working with our equine friend. We pretty much all keep this in mind but where the problem often occurs is when we say to ourselves "I'll only do that this once". And all it takes is once. Even if nothing happens when we make an unsafe choice, this is how habits develop and once a bad habit develops, they can be difficult to break.

I find myself guilty in this regard just as much as anyone else I've ever seen, if not even more so! There are so many times I have to admit that I know that I shouldn't do some unwise thing that is unsafe for me with a horse but I'm in a hurry so I think "Oh, this will be the last time I do this", and then next time I do the same, and the next and on and on like that. This is why it is so important not to let bad habits develop because it could easily mean a disability for life or possibly even prove fatal. Horses are very dangerous creatures, which means they need to be handled as such. I'm not in any way encouraging you to be timid around horses but rather just be cautious. There is a big difference between cautious and timid, and we need to recognize that. So here are a few reminders of safety tips that we need to apply everyday when working with our four legged friends.

1. Always let the horse know you are coming when approaching from behind and when passing behind him, place a hand on his hind quarters and brush the horse as you walk behind him, this way if he happened to kick the impact would be much less than if he had some wind up time before he reached you. It is much safer to approach a horse from the front and work your way back to his hindquarters.
2. When leading your horse, make sure that he stays up right alongside you because, if allowed to walk behind he could trample you if something frightened him, even something as little as a cat jumping around in the bushes could make him run right over you in fear. Horses are very fearful animals by nature. A lot of this can be helped with proper training but their fearful instinct is always there.
3. When tying up a horse, be sure to tie him to something very stout and make sure that your halter and lead are very tough in case he gets scared and jerks back. A stout all around set up can help avoid potential danger especially in learning that he can jerk out of what is holding him, which can lead to great annoyance and possibly harm. Be sure that you use a knot on the lead that can be quickly undone by you if the horse panics.
4. Never try to get in between two fighting horses to stop the fight, this is very dangerous and rarely does any good. But it is a very easy way to get a bad injury!

The list goes on and on and I am sure that a lot of you are already aware of this and practice this daily, but often reminders are always helpful to keep us and our fellow riders safe. So as we have fun with our four legged friends this summer, let's always remember safety first, because there's

nothing we can do with our horses that is as important as looking after our safety and our horses. So stay safe and enjoy the rest of your summer!

Helping Hands Horsemanship is here to help you in any way we are able with your horse life. So if you have any horse questions or anything that we can help you with, please don't hesitate to send us an email, we are always glad to hear from each and every one of you. We can be reached at [helpinghandshorsemanship@gmail.com](mailto:helpinghandshorsemanship@gmail.com).

Thank you and God bless!

Helping Hands Horsemanship

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