

Building Rope Halters

Presenter: Annemarie McAsey

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Making your own rope halters is a rewarding process. You get an extra feeling of accomplishment knowing that your horse is responding to something personally made with your own hands. The first time that you attempt to make a halter, you may spend a few hours tying and untying the knots, studying the instructions, and thinking about all the money you are saving making your own tack! Don't get discouraged if you make mistakes or have to start over from the beginning -- each successive rope halter that you make will be a little bit easier, until you have it down to a 10 minute process!

Depending on the size of your horse, these are the materials you need:

Size of Horse	Amount of Rope Needed
Small – Pony	18 Feet
Medium – Arab	20 Feet
Large – Horse	22 Feet
Extra Large - Warmblood	24 Feet
Extra Extra Large - Draft	26-28 Feet

Ideally you would want to use ¼” double braided nylon rope. This is the best choice because it has a braided nylon sleeve over a braided nylon core which makes for a very soft rope. You can find this type of rope at a marine supply store, hardware store or mail order it from many sources. This rope is much more expensive than other ropes that you'll find in the hardware store, but there is definitely a difference in quality. Nylon double braid also has a tensile breaking strength of 2,300 pounds per square inch (PSI), making it extremely durable. Many people use ¼” or 3/8” nylon or polyester rope to make halters it really comes down to a personal preference. And, you may just have to use what you have available.

You'll also need a sharp knife or single edge (safety) razor blade to trim the ends of the rope and a lighter or matches to melt/seal the ends of the rope when finished.

Knots

You may want to practice these knots before you start making your halter to lessen the frustration level...

The Overhand Knot

This rope halter relies on an overhand knot as the basis for making your halter. This is what an overhand knot looks like. If you can tie your shoes then you can tie this knot! Tying the overhand knot is simple.



This is a "recipe" for a rope halter – you may have to adjust the suggested measurements to fit your horse. These instructions suggest enough rope for the average horse of each size. This should leave you enough margin of error to have a bit of rope left over. You'll appreciate this if you go through all the effort to make a halter and it comes up short! If you have to decide on a size -- It's better to have a halter that is a little bit too big than one that is too small.

Average Size Halter Instructions (Horse)

	<p>Step 1: Remembering that we have started with our rope offset at the ends about 3.5 – 4 foot, we find our new center and tie 2 overhand knots 9" apart.</p>
	<p>Step 2: Keeping our knots even, we follow the rope down about 19" and double it back on itself towards the end. Gather up about the last 9" and tie a large overhand knot with all 4 strands. Make sure the loop you leave is large enough to accommodate your lead rope.</p>
	<p>Step 3: Measure about 9" back and tie another overhand knot with both strands. This is the knot that sits in the horse's throatlatch area. Find the longer of the two strands of rope and use that one from this point forward. Proceed to Step 4.</p>
	<p>Step 4: Trace up the rope about 12", double the rope back on itself and form another loop again using the overhand knot. This is the knot that you tie to when you put the halter on the horse.</p>
	<p>Step 5: Measure out 10" for your cheek piece and take the end of you rope and trace it back through the cheek piece knot on the same side as you loop. You may also choose to tie a double overhand knot here if you remember it from class. If not, just trace your rope through the existing knot.</p>
	<p>Step 6: Trace the existing noseband rope so that the new piece is the same length and trace the other cheek piece knot (or tie another double over hand knot)</p>
	<p>Step 7: Measure out another 10" length of rope for your cheek piece on the right side of the horse's head.</p>
	<p>Step 8: Find the shorter piece of rope you abandoned at Step 3 and using the loop knot on the opposite side find the place the two ropes intersect most evenly and tie an overhand knot there.</p>
	<p>Step 9: Try you halter on a horse and see that it fits correctly. If any of the knots are out of place, untie your halter back to that step and adjust the measurements. If you run out of rope during any step in this procedure you did not have the right amount offset in the very beginning</p>
	<p>Step 10: Once you are sure that your halter is the size you want it, trim the excess off the 2 ends so that they are even and seal the ends. Do not put a halter on a horse that needs to be adjusted and tie him up. If he pulls on it at all he will tighten all the knots up and you will not be able to get them undone!</p>

