

# Equine Leg Suturing



## Disclaimer

A series of booklets (instructions for skills and flipped classroom materials) has been developed by the Clinical Skills Lab team (staff, recent graduates and students) from Bristol Veterinary School, University of Bristol, UK.

### Please note:

- Each flipped classroom booklet includes ways to prepare for learning a skill in class; it is acknowledged that there are often other approaches. Before using the booklets, students should check with their university or college to determine whether the approaches illustrated are acceptable in their context or whether alternative resources should be used.
- The booklets are made available in good faith and may be subject to changes.
- In using these booklets, you must adopt safe working procedures and take your own risk assessments (as and when appropriate), checked by your university, college etc. The University of Bristol will not be liable for any loss or damage resulting from failure to adhere to such practices.

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## Equipment list: Equine leg suturing

### Equipment for this station:

- Leg wound model
- Gillies or Olsen Hegar needle holders  
N.B. Both have built-in cutting blades
- Rat tooth forceps
- Suture material
- Tray
- Disposable gloves

### Considerations for this station:

- Refer to 'CSL\_S01 Simple Interrupted Suture' booklet for the suture technique and 'CSL\_SP05 Surgical instruments' for correct instrument handling.
- Assume that the wound is a simple skin laceration on the lateral aspect of the distal limb with no involvement of deeper or synovial structures.
- For more information of complex wound management see 'CSL\_E05 Equine Laceration Models'.
- Anyone unable to crouch can place the model on a table.

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.

# Clinical Skills: Equine leg suturing



Consider your safety and how to maintain sterility when handling the surgical instruments and suture material when suturing a horse's leg.

- The wound will not be draped
- You will be working near to the ground, in a vertical orientation
- A handler will hold the horse



Select a pair of gillies or Olsen Hegar needle holders, a pair of rat tooth forceps and some suture material and place them on a tray.

Note: On a live horse, the instruments will be sterile, and you will wear sterile gloves and appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) such as steel toe cap boots and a hard hat.



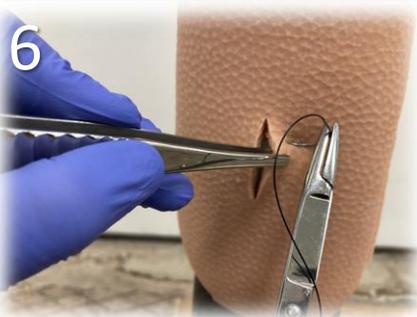
To maintain sterility, the free end of the suture material should be gathered in your dominant hand.



Position yourself to the side of the limb. Crouch down, do not kneel or rest one knee on the floor as you must be able to get up and move rapidly. Ensure your head is not in front of a fore limb or behind a hind limb.



Anyone unable to crouch you can place the model on a table to practise the skill in the CSL.



Perform a simple interrupted suture pattern.

Please refer to 'CSL\_S01 Simple Interrupted Suture' for details on how to perform the suture.

The free end of the suture material then must be transferred to your non-dominant hand while you tie the knot.



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# Clinical Skills: Equine leg suturing



Palm the rat tooth forceps to free your finger and thumb when pulling the suture material through.



The suture material is then gathered up in your non-dominant hand while you tie the knot.



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## Resetting the station: Equine leg suturing

1. Remove the sutures from the model
2. Return the instruments to the tray

*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: Equine leg suturing

- Suturing is much easier to perform on a stationary target so use sedation as required.
- A headtorch will help you see in a dark stable, even during the day.
- Distal limb wounds in horses can be challenging and take a while to heal, make sure you communicate this with the owner.