

Placing a Bridle on a Horse



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- 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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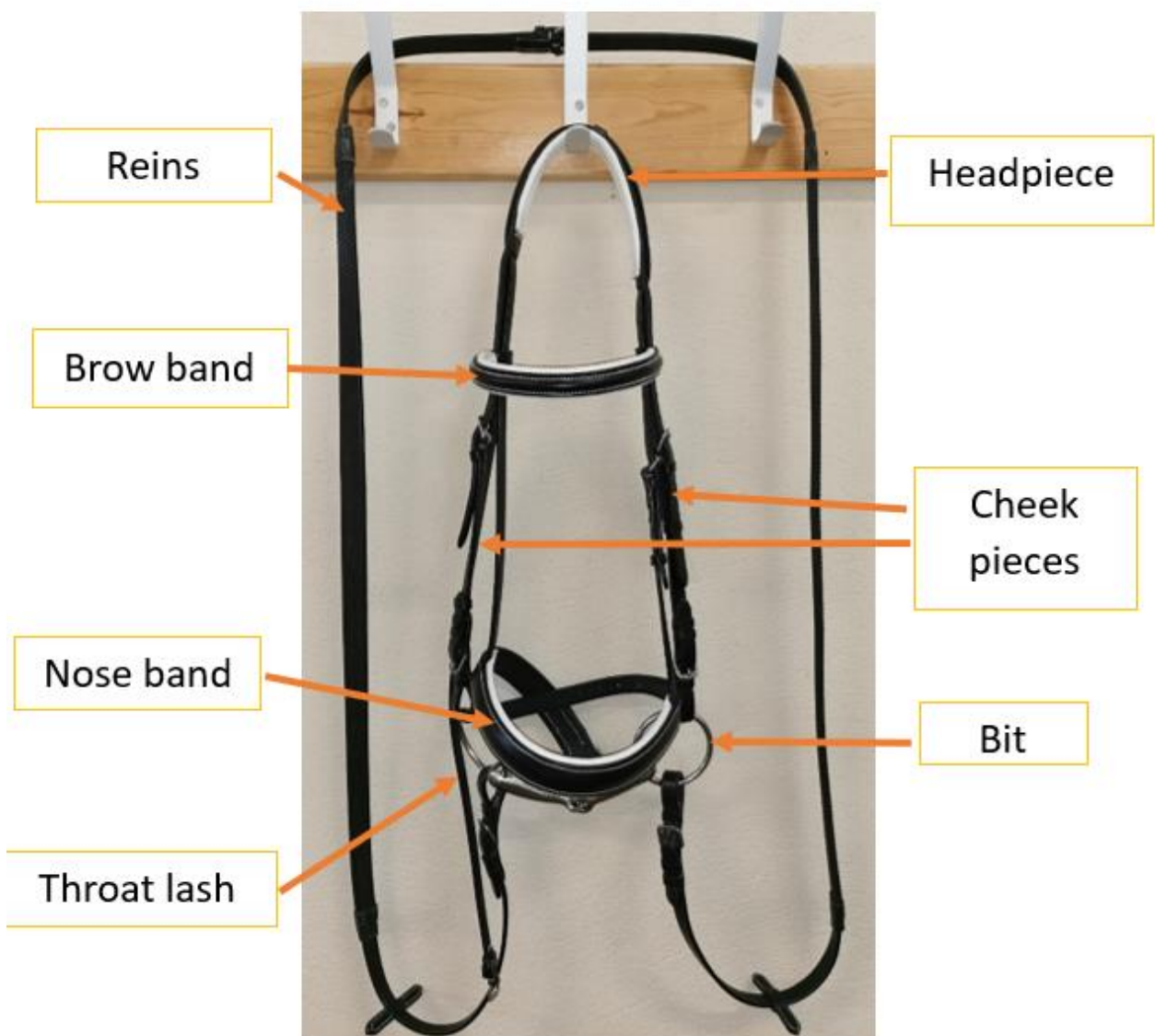
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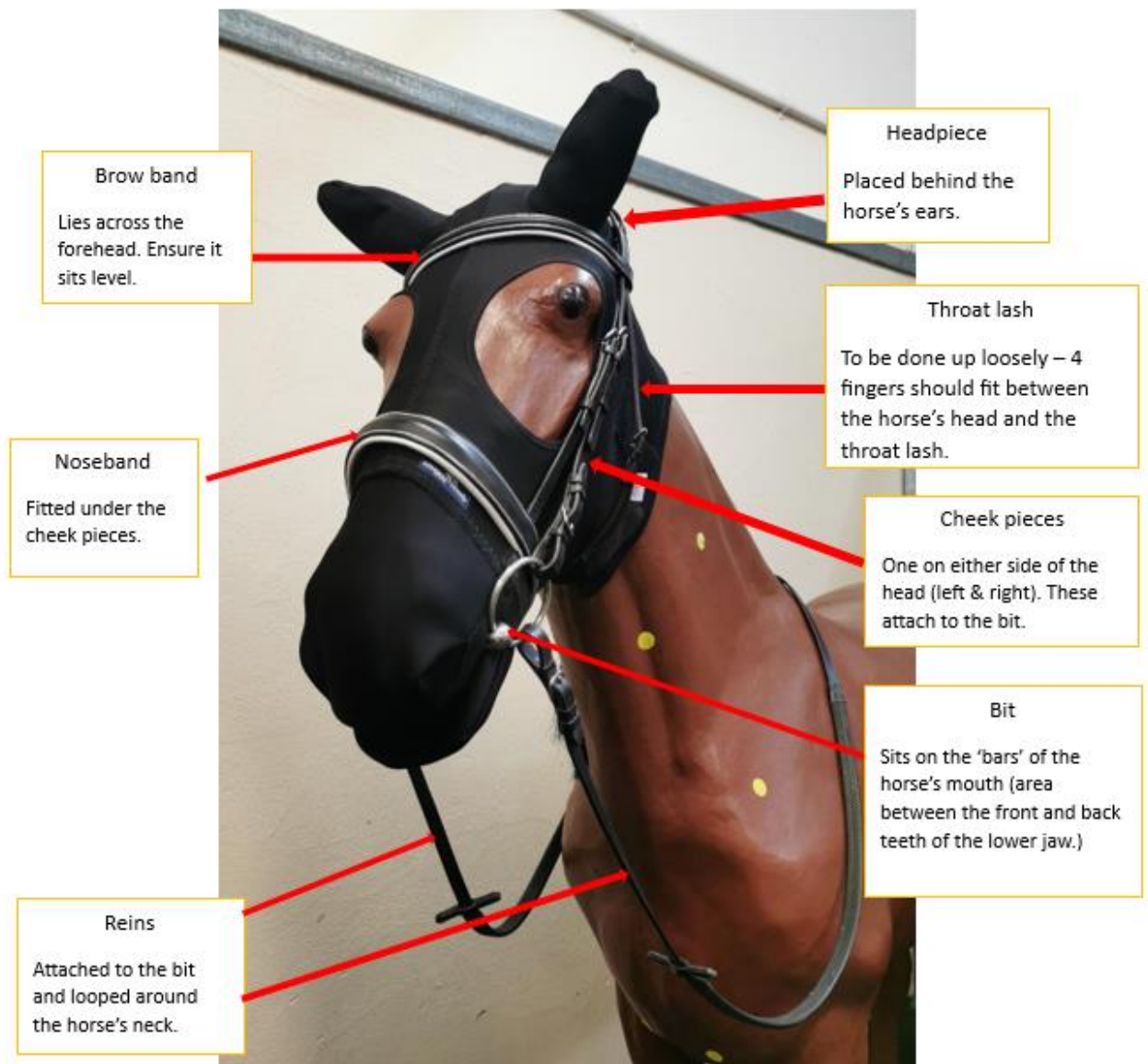
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Points of the Bridle



Points of the Bridle



Equipment list:

Placing a Bridle on a Horse

Equipment for this station:

- Model horse
- Bridle
- Headcollar
- Tie ring (with a piece of string attached)

Considerations for this station:

- Refer to the video on Blackboard for a demonstration of how to apply a bridle.
- Note: The equine model does not have teeth.
- Personal protective equipment (PPE) must be worn when working with horses, including safety boots and a hard hat.
- Tacking up a horse involves placing the bridle and the saddle. For the saddle refer to booklet: 'CSL_H05 Placing a Saddle on a Horse'.

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:

Placing a Bridle on a Horse



1 Place a headcollar on the horse and tie the lead rope to the string on the tie ring using a quick release knot.

Refer to the booklet 'Placing a Headcollar CSL_H03' for guidance.



2 Once the horse is securely tied up, orientate the bridle and make sure it is not fastened (i.e., the noseband and throat lash are undone) so that it is ready to be placed on the horse.



3 Measure the bridle against the side of the horse's head to ensure it is the correct size and adjust if necessary.



4 Undo the quick release knot leaving the lead rope through the string. Undo the headcollar, let the noseband pass under the muzzle and move the whole headcollar down the neck. Fasten loosely with the headpiece buckle (see photo) but do not thread the free end through the lower part of the buckle so that you can release the horse quickly if necessary.



5 Hold the bridle by looping the headpiece over your left arm.

Standing on the horse's left (near) side, pass the reins over the horse's head and place the reins over the horse's neck.



6 Stand facing the same way as the horse. Pass your right arm under the horse's head and then hold both cheek pieces in your right hand,. Whilst you hold both sides of the bridle in front of the horse, hold the bit flat across your left hand.

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Encourage the horse to open its mouth by placing your left thumb into the corner of the mouth. Use your left hand to gently guide the bit into the mouth, being careful not to knock it against the horse's front teeth. Gently lift the headpiece up with your right hand so the bit moves up into the corners of the mouth.



8

Hold the headpiece in your left hand and use your right hand to move the bridle up towards the ears. Push the right ear forward under the headpiece.

Note: While moving the bridle towards the ears, keep the bridle up to prevent the bit falling out of the mouth.



9

Next push the left ear forward under the headpiece until it sits comfortably behind both ears.



10

Thread the nose band inside the cheek pieces so it lies flat against the horse's head and fasten the buckle under the chin.



11

Ensure you can fit 2 fingers (flat - as shown in the photo) between the nose band and the horse's jaw.



12

Fasten the throat lash buckle.

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13

Check the throat lash is not too tight: a hand's width or 4 fingers (orientated as shown in photo) should fit between the horse's cheek and the throat lash.



14

Stand in front of the horse and check the bridle is fitting comfortably:

- Is it symmetrical?
- Is the brow band straight?

Pull the forelock out from underneath the brow band (forelock not present on the model)



15

Finally check the height of the bit. It shouldn't be too low that it knocks the horse's front teeth or too high that it is pulling on the corners of the mouth. Adjust the cheek pieces, as necessary.

The headcollar can now be removed from the neck.



16

To lead the horse out:

Pass the reins over the horse's head.

Hold the reins near the bridle with your right hand and near the end (reins' buckle) with your left hand.



17

If leaving a horse unattended e.g. while going to get the saddle, it is best to secure the reins and reapply the headcollar.

This is to prevent the risk of the horse stepping on the reins or getting a leg caught through them.



18

Leave the reins over the horse's neck. To secure the reins twist them together several times (as shown in the photo above).

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19 Underdo the throat lash and pass it through the twisted reins.



20 Re-fasten the throat lash buckle.



21 The reins are now safely held up under the throat.



22 Reapply the headcollar over the bridle and tie the lead rope to the string on the tie ring using a quick release knot.



23 **To remove the bridle:**
Ensure the reins are placed over the horse's head and on the neck.
Place the headcollar around the horse's neck and fasten loosely with the headpiece buckle. Put the lead rope through the tie string (*if not already*).
Undo the throat lash and the noseband.



24 Move the reins up to the headpiece. Holding both sides of the headpiece and the reins, slide the bridle forward over the ears and down to release the bit from the mouth. Take care not to catch the teeth.
Either place the headcollar on horse's head and tie up with a quick release knot, or remove the headcollar, leaving the horse loose in the stable.

Resetting the station: Placing a Bridle on a Horse

1. Place the bridle on the hook outside the stable.
2. Loop the reins up over the hook so they don't trail on the floor.

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:

Placing a Bridle on a Horse

- Many horses are used to having a bridle fitted and will stand still whilst you place it. However, some may be head shy and lift their head up, making it harder to put the bridle on. In these cases, remain calm and be patient – ensure the horse is aware of what you are doing and try to provide reassurance. It may be helpful to put your hand over the horse's nose to help stabilise the head.
- Always be careful around horses – some may kick, bite or barge past you. Always be aware of where you are standing in relation to the horse and stable door and be careful not to startle the horse.
- Approach a horse from the horse's left (near) side; this is an equine convention and therefore horses are used to such an approach.
- When moving around the horse, do not walk under the horse's neck when changing sides.
- Never walk behind the horse – this is dangerous.
- If tying up a horse use a quick release knot (see 'CSL_F00 Putting on a Halter' for illustrations and instructions about tying a quick release knot). Also avoid tying to a fixed point e.g. a metal ring, in case the horse pulls backwards suddenly (e.g. if startled); instead, tie to something that would break under pressure (e.g. a piece of string through the ring) or use one of the commercially available products that has a quick release mechanism.