

Rope Halter Fit

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Richard Winters, a renowned horsemanship trainer and 2009 Road to the Horse champion, starts all of his young horses in a rope halter and lead rope to help them learn to yield to pressure and to protect their mouths from the bit.

Once you've created the rope halter and are ready to place it on your horse, Winters says to be mindful of the following: Be sure to pull the halter up snugly around your horse's nose and throatlatch to keep it from sagging down after it's tied. Next, take the end of the halter and run it down through the loop on the other side. Wrap the end around the loop in a counter-clockwise direction and tie it directly around the loop. Now, the end of the halter will point toward your horse's tail and leave a half-hitch around the loop itself. This configuration will allow you to loosen the knot (even when it's very tight) by wiggling the loop to break the bind.

To create "reins," attach the snap of your lead rope to the loop you tied at the base of the halter. Next, take the other end of the lead rope and tie it to the loop using a barnyard knot (similar to a knot that you would use to tie your horse to a hitching post). If you don't have room to run the end of the lead rope through the loop of the halter, then pass the end of the rope over your horse's neck and secure it to the side cheek piece of the left-hand side of your halter (above the fiador knot). Once tied, this will keep your new right-hand rein pulling at the base of your halter.

Learn how to make your own rope halter >>