

Back Country Horsemen of Montana

PACKING WITH HORSES & MULES



Horsemen's Creed—When I ride out of the mountains, I'll leave only hoof prints, take only memories.

The purpose of this packing booklet is to provide basic information in an organized manner to help you learn about horses and equipment and to effectively plan and take pack trips in the back country. Use of qualified persons to help with the teaching of packing fundamentals and back country safety will make packing easier and more fun.

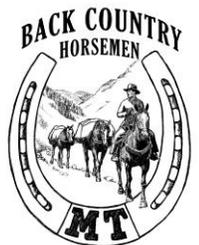
Packing as a hobby, or as a business, can be very enjoyable with the proper equipment, a basic knowledge of the horse, good camping equipment, a sound trip itinerary, well-thought-out menus, and other details will help to make a well-rounded pack trip.

The Back Country Horsemen of Montana is dedicated to protecting, preserving and improving the back country resource by volunteering time and equipment to government agencies for such tasks as clearing trails, building trails, building trailhead facilities, packing out trash and other projects that will benefit both horsemen and non-horsemen.



Mission Statement

To perpetuate the common sense use and enjoyment of horses in America's back country, roadless backcountry and wilderness areas; To work to ensure that public lands remain open to recreational stock use; To assist the various government and private agencies in their maintenance and management of said resource; To educate, encourage and solicit active participation by the general public in the wise and sustaining use of the back country resource by horses and people commensurate with our heritage; To foster and encourage the formation of new state back country horsemen organizations; To seek out opportunities to enhance existing areas of recreation for stock users.



HISTORY OF PACKING

Over 700 years ago Genghis Kahn, founder of the Mongol Empire, nearly took over the known world of his time. How did he supply his army? He



was one of the first succesful packers of ancient times. Pack stock at that time was anything on four legs; horses, yaks, possibly burros, and camels. Each animal that

was packed, also had a characteristic of being edible. After Genghis, the Romans developed a cross buck style saddle to pack cargo into (Gaul) France and England.

Most of the early packing was done with the use of bags as there was a lack of pads to protect the animal being packed. The Aparejo saddle was one of the first efforts to use a protective pad. History says the Aparaejo originated in Arabia, first for horses, burrows and then camels. In the eighth century the Aparejo was introduced into Spain and subsequently Mexico and the U.S..

Aparejo is a Spanish word meaning a mat made of fibrous Agave (cactus) material or leather. Both types of mats are filled with dried grass or other material to protect the pack animal's body. A later modification was the addition of wooden stiffeners to distribute the weight of the load.

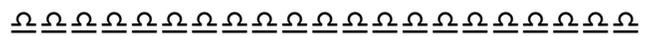


The Sawbuck also has ancient origins. It's design is simple and variations, such as the camel saddle in the Middle East, appear world wide. As the pack saddle of the fur trapper and the prospector, the sawbuck played a role in opening the American west. In the years following the Lewis and Clark expeditions, sawbucks packed just about everything a horse could carry.

The Decker pack saddle is the most widely used pack saddle in the Northwest today and was developed by a man in Kooskia, Idaho by the name of O. P. Robinett. The initial O.P.R. pack saddle was seen around 1906, and was remarkably similar to a

design of a Nez Perce riding saddle, which had forks of deer horn covered with leather, a large stuffed pad in addition to wooden bars. The O.P.R. saddle was renamed after the Decker brothers who started commercially making the saddle. The Decker saddle proved to be very useful and durable as it was used extensively to haul mining ore and mining equipment in the steep and rugged Idaho back country.

Today in Montana, the Decker pack saddle is the most popular and is believed more versatile than a Sawbuck. It is substantially stronger, more easily fitted to any horse or mule, has adjustable rigging and is considered to be more "humane" when hauling large and heavy loads.



SO YOU WANT TO TAKE A PACK TRIP!

Factors to Consider:

- ◆ Purpose of the trip? Sightseeing, hunting, fishing, tour of range and forest, or what?
- ◆ Destination of the trip? Can a loop trip be made? Or is it an "up and back" trip, or a "go through" situation?
- ◆ Will you end up at the same location as you started, or will someone need to move the vehicles to meet you?
- ◆ How far must the animals be trailered to the jump-off point?
- ◆ How rough is the country? Are there dangerous places where people should dismount and lead their horses across slides or drop-offs, or is the country gentle and rolling?
- ◆ How far can you travel in a day? Depends on those participating: their age, condition, trip purpose; Depends on condition of stock; Distance traveled can depend on the terrain; Are you there to relax or do you need to get to a destination?
- ◆ How often to move camp? How long will you be gone. How much country will be covered. Can you ride from a base camp in three or four directions without moving camp? Perhaps smaller spike camps can be set up.
- ◆ **Don't take unnecessary chances, play it safe, plan ahead, be comfortable, don't put too much stress on people or animals.**

USE COMON SENSE!

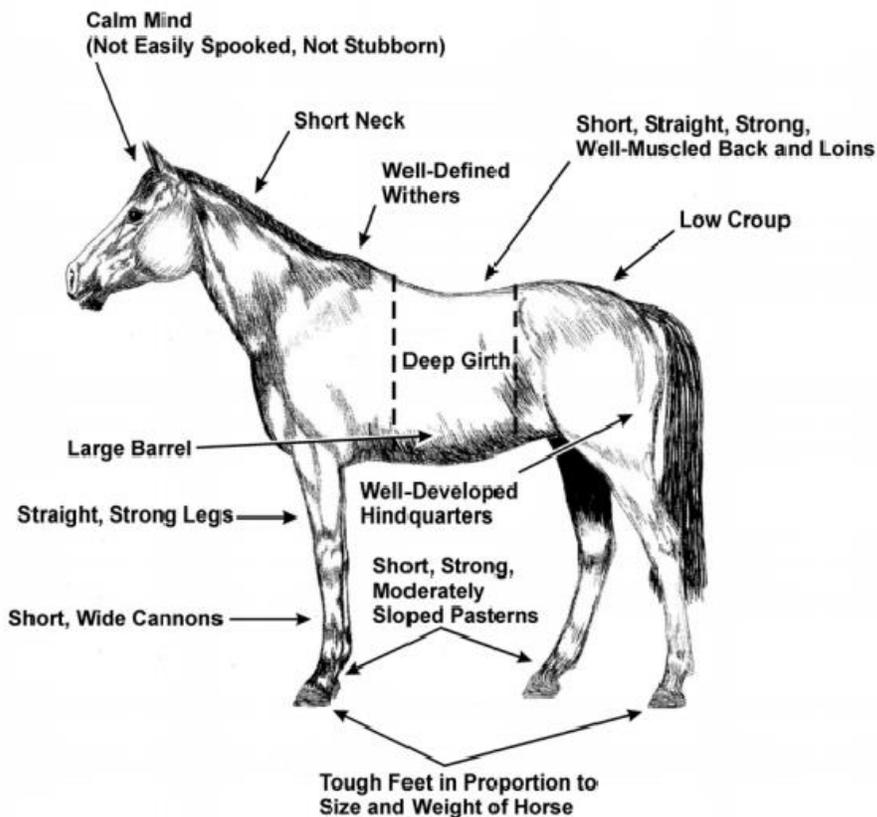
HORSE BASICS

The Nature of the Horse

- ◆ All horses can kick, bite, strike and step on your toes!
- ◆ Horses are prey animals - fight or flight.
- ◆ Horses are herd animals and make friendships.
- ◆ When a horse is under physical pressure, his instincts take over and training goes out the window.
- ◆ The horse has his own space. It is a circle about 12-15 feet around him. This is the area he can either defend or still have time to get away if there is an opening.
- ◆ The horse has a keen sense of hearing and the eyes on the side of his head allow him to see almost all the way around himself. He cannot see directly behind or immediately in front of himself - so stay where he can see you.
- ◆ Horses react quickly to surprises - they will bolt and run and then turn and look.

Important Safety Rules

- ◆ Always greet the horse before approaching - he may be dozing or unsure of who/what you are.
- ◆ Notice the horse's demeanor - ears forward or pinned back; is he acting aggressive or calm?
- ◆ Approach the shoulder, never head on or from behind - don't act like a predator - no sneaking!
- ◆ Stroke the horse, do not slap or pat.
- ◆ Never duck under the lead rope while tied.
- ◆ Stay in the "safety" zone; stay close to the horse with a hand on when going around behind. If the horse kicks out you are much safer.
- ◆ Always know where his feet are and your feet are! Is it fly season that may cause stomping hooves?
- ◆ Most importantly, be aware of your surroundings and your horse's mood. Be one step ahead of something that may go wrong and keep safety for you and your horse a top priority.



Selecting a Pack Horse or Mule

A pack horse or mule should be friendly with a gentle nature, have no fear of humans, be able and willing to move out freely under pack, even on reasonable rough-going trails, and should be sure-footed with a minimum of rock and roll.

He should be easy to catch, lead readily and stand quietly when tied. While age isn't always a factor, an older, more experienced horse is usually calmer and less prone to spook.

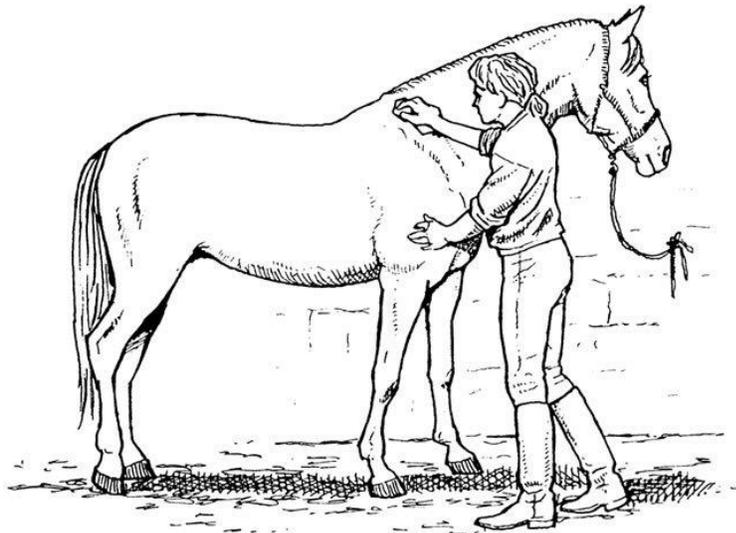
After assessing his temperament, the next most important thing to consider is conformation. Size, or more importantly bone structure can also be important when considering the weight of your loads and how high you want to lift your packs. A preferable height would be 14 to 15.2 hands and weigh approximately 1,000 to 1,200 pounds.

Grooming the Pack Horse or Mule

It is important to groom a pack horse, as any other, before saddling. Grooming a horse daily allows you to check on your horse's general health and well-being. At a minimum, groom before being worked, and after as well.

The main reasons for daily grooming include:

- ◆ Improved health of the skin and coat
- ◆ Decreases the chance of various health problems such as thrush, scratches, and other skin problems
- ◆ Cleans the horse, so chafing does not occur under areas of tack
- ◆ Gives the groom a chance to check the horse's health, such as looking for cuts, heat, swelling, lameness, a change in temperament (such as depression) which could indicate the horse is sick, and look to see if the horse has loose or missing horseshoes



- ◆ Helps to form a relationship between horse and handler, which can carry over to other handling duties and packing
- ◆ There are lots of varied grooming tools on the market today, but here is a list of the few and basic essential tools:

Basic Minimum Equipment:



Metal curry-Used gently to loosen caked dirt on body with light, short strokes going with the hair (never used on legs or face or any bony area)



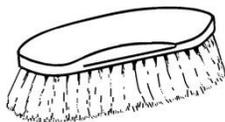
Rubber curry-Also used to loosen caked dirt or sweat on body using a small, circular motion (not for use on legs, face or bony areas)



Shedding Blade-Short dull teeth used to remove winter hair (not for use on legs, face or bony areas)



Body Brush/Stiff-Used to remove the dirt and dander stirred up by the curry; start at the neck in the direction of hair growth with a firm stroke and flicking motion; pay special attention to the saddle & girth areas, the belly, between the legs, the chest and the legs



Body Brush/Soft-Used last to remove fine dirt and dust for the finishing touch; can be used on the face and legs



Mane & Tail Comb/Brush-Used to remove tangles and debris



Hoof Pick-Used to remove dirt, rocks and manure from hoof; hoof should be inspected for punctures or chips

PACK SADDLES & EQUIPMENT

There are different types of equipment used to carry gear into the back country. In this booklet we will focus on the Decker saddle and the use of canvas manties called cargino. The basics are the same regardless of what system you use: a quality and well-fitting saddle, a clean, proper pack pad, a sturdy halter, load balance and practicing safety at all times.

Decker Pack Saddle



Riding Saddle Panniers



Sawbuck Saddle



Decker Panniers

Canvas/Soft



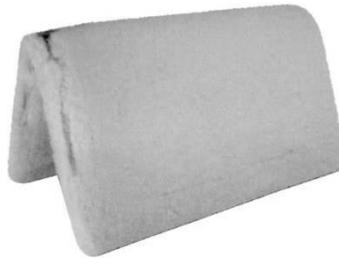
Pannier Top Pack-
"H" style



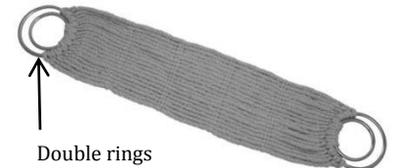
Hard-sided



Pack Saddle Pad



Pack Saddle Cinch



Pack Halters & Lead Rope



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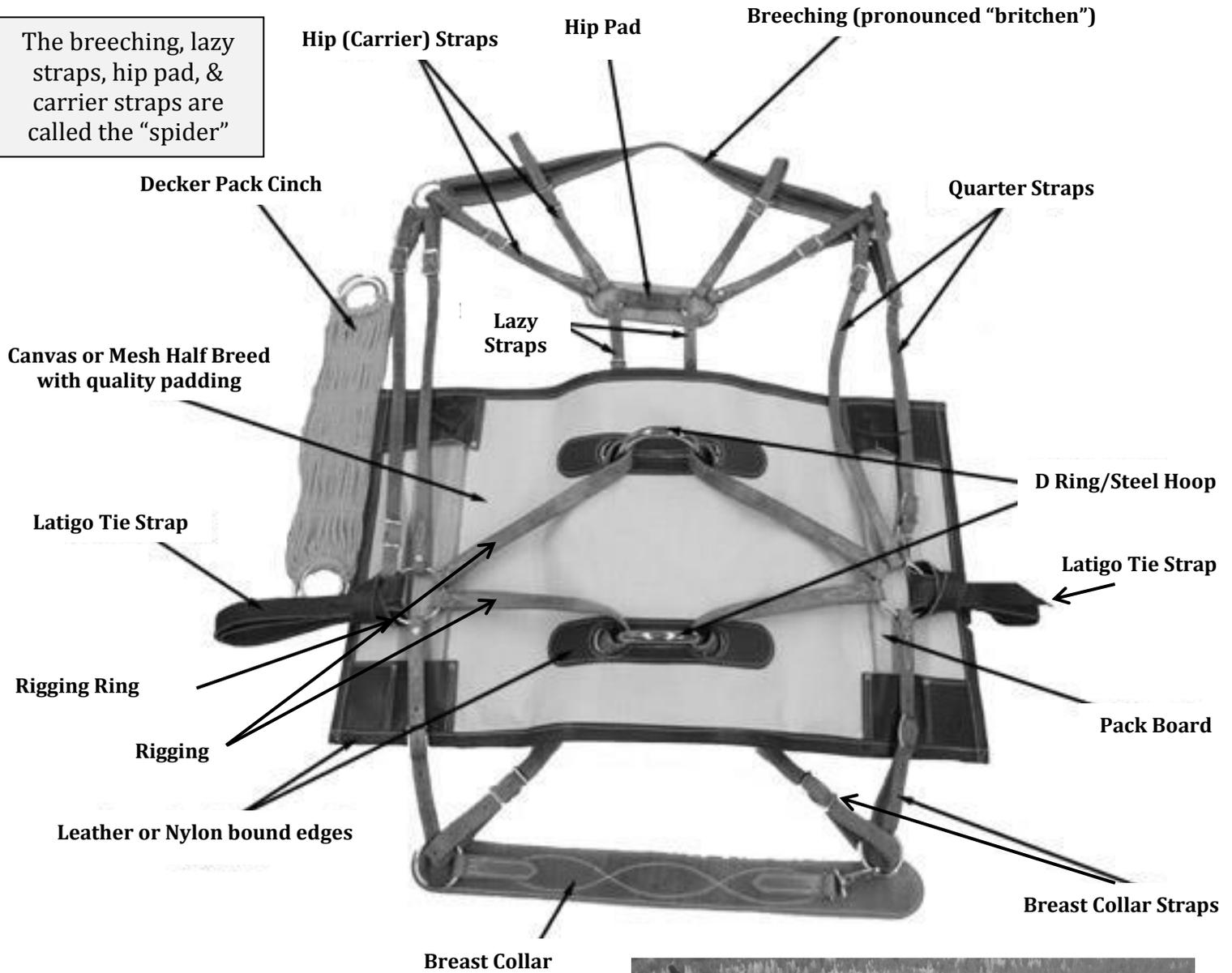
Leather side-pull

Rope no hardware

Lead rope-12 foot
1/2 inch 3-strand composite

ANATOMY OF THE DECKER PACK SADDLE

The breeching, lazy straps, hip pad, & carrier straps are called the "spider"



Decker bars with leather rigging/buckles



Decker saddle

The Decker saddle is made of two wooden bars for the animal's back, secured in front and back by metal arches, called "D" rings. Covering this is a "half-breed", which is stuffed with padding. A wooden board runs on each side of the "half-breed" to help distribute the load evenly over the back and upper rib areas. The Decker has only one cinch but a similar breast collar and breeching as the Sawbuck. Because of the metal "D" rings, that can be heated and bent, this saddle is adjustable to more animals than the Sawbuck, as mentioned on page 2.

The Decker may be used with bags, boxes, manties, or used to carry unusual shaped loads such as lumber, wheelbarrows, barrels, coolers, wooden tool boxes and just about any shape item...including mountain goats!



Transporting goats via horse from a trap west of Choteau, MT (c. 1940's)

FITTING THE DECKER PACK SADDLE

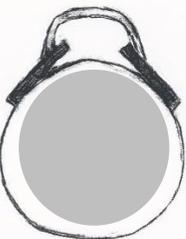
Fitting the Tree

To get a true fit of the wooden bars, all of the leather straps and the "halfbreed" must be removed, leaving only the "D" rings and the wooden bars. Make sure the bars are correctly oriented with the rounded and slightly upturned wooden bars pointing forward. Sprinkle the back of the animal where the tree will sit with a light coating of flour. Moisten the undersides of the bars with a wet cloth, then carefully set the bars in the proper position on the floured back and gently press straight down. The bars should fit against the rear portion of the shoulder blades, not on top of them. Now lift straight up, turn the tree over, and you will have an exact impression of how the tree fits your animal. If the flour covers the entire bottom of the surface of the bars, you have a perfect fit. However, if you have spots that have not touched the flour this indicates you have high spots that will need to be rasped off. A good wood rasp or a worn out shoeing rasp works well for this process, taking only a little bit off at a time. Repeat this process until you achieve a proper fit. If necessary, the metal "D" rings can be heated and bent to also adjust the fit.

Front View of Pack Saddle Bars



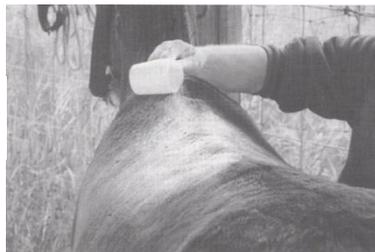
Correct Fit
Average Horse



Incorrect
Bars contact only on the bottom
Wide Horse



Incorrect
Bars contact only on the top
Narrow Horse



Bob Hoverson, retired USFS packer and author of "The Packer's Field Manual", demonstrates bar fitting in his book and shows two examples of poor tree construction; bolt heads are not counter-sunk deep enough and bow attachments extend above the bar-ropes will hang up and wear. (photo above)

SADDLING STOCK

Pack Saddle Pad

A good saddle pad should be big enough to allow at least two inches all around the saddle (approximately 30" X 40"). It should also be thick enough to provide good protection, washable and breathable; it should wick away the sweat. Keep pads as clean as possible and brush before every use to remove caked dirt and sweat. Power washing and hanging to completely dry several times a season is a good way to thoroughly clean.



Saddling

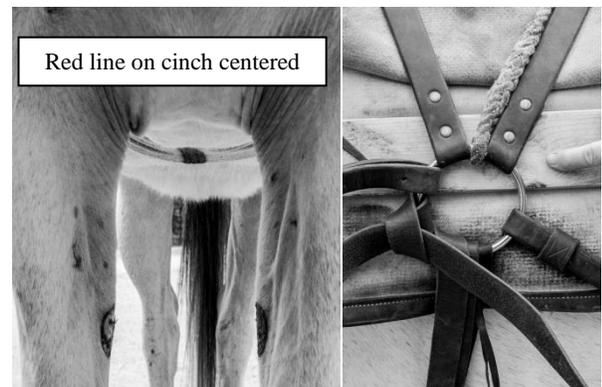
Step 1. The first step in proper saddling is making sure to put the pad in the right place. A saddle pad can shift out the back, but will not slide forward. Gently toss the pad slightly forward on the neck and slide (use a "flicking" motion) towards the tail to smooth out the hair and make sure any insects are removed. Place the pad once again slightly forward and slide into place with the front of the pad lined up with the front of the leg/shoulder.



Step 2. Place the saddle on the animal so that the bars of the tree are just behind the shoulder blade. At this point, walk around the animal and make sure that your pad is even all the way around and not too long on one side. Before letting down the harness and tightening the cinch, take hold of the front "D" ring with your right hand, slide your left hand under the pad and gently push up to create a gap (wedgie) there so when the saddle shifts into proper position the pad does not pinch the withers.



Step 3. Tighten the cinch slightly, just enough to keep saddle in proper position. (Many animals learn to "blow" or expand their belly when being saddled). As you continue to fit the rest of the harness make small tightening adjustments to the cinch. Before loading the animal, check the cinch so that it is snug, but not too tight. Also make sure your cinch rings are even on each side and center line of the cinch is centered underneath the animal. The cinch ring should go half a ring behind the elbow and half a ring above the point of the elbow. Make sure you measure your animal and buy a cinch that is the right length. The cinch also needs to lie in the proper position below the rigging. This can be changed by using the buckles underneath the half-breed that are screwed to the wooden bars. If in doubt about the rigging position, no harm will be done if you rig a little behind the optimal position, as long as the girth crossed the animal's brisket and doesn't encircle the belly where it will interfere with breathing. Rigged too far forward, a cinch can rub an open sore in as little as half a mile.



The rigging ring should be half on and half below the bottom edge of the pack board. Use a "**quick release knot**" on both sides with knot facing forward towards the animal's chest. This will allow for adjustments along the



Quick Release Knot →

trail by simply pushing back and out on the packs to reach the knot. It is also a safety measure in case you have problems and need to quickly remove the saddle.

Step 4. Pull the “spider” harness from the saddle and let it slide down over the hips, while gently pulling the tail out and over the breeching. There are several steps to properly fitting these straps that keep your saddle and loads in place while going down hills.

a. Adjust the two lazy straps so hip pad is halfway between the top of the croup and the base of the tail.

b. The carrier straps are adjusted so that the breeching is about four inches, or the width of a hand, below the most prominent part of the back of the hip.

c. The breeching is not left horizontal, but should tip slightly up to match the contour of the animal’s haunch. When pressure is applied the breeching will pull flat against the haunch. This is very important to avoid rubbing sores.

d. Tighten the quarter straps so that the breeching is about four inches (a hand’s width) from the haunch. Quarter straps should just be slack when the animal is standing normally.

Make sure the breeching is not lopsided, meaning too far to the left or to the right side-the rings lay evenly on either side of the flank.

~The bottom quarter strap should be slightly looser than the top. Proper fitting allows the animal to stride out without being hindered.

~Some packers will stop before a very steep downhill and tighten the quarter straps.



Step 5. Attach the breast collar and adjust so your hand fits flat between the collar and chest. Too high or too tight and the collar can restrict breathing on steep grades, and too loose it can drape down over the point of the shoulder and rub spots or impede movement. The animal should be able to get his head down easily to drink. Consider the breast collar as insurance against a loose cinch.



Finally, take a final walk around and make sure none of the leather is twisted and everything is lying flat, all buckles are fastened, keepers are pushed up and leather ends are through buckles, etc. Take a final inspection before loading. Once out on the trail you should watch for “hair cutting” or small bald spots which would indicate that you need to make some small adjustments for a proper fit. Also, the shape and weight of your animal will change over the year as they gain or lose weight, so keep any eye out for proper fit and adjust as needed.



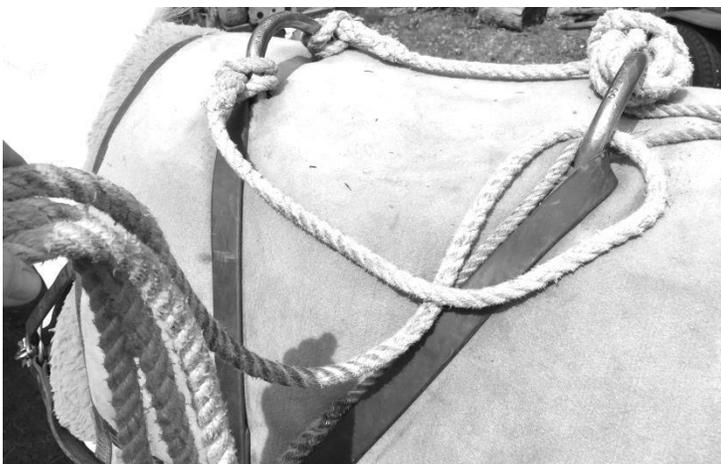
Pigtails & Sling (Swing) Ropes

You will need to add your own pigtail and sling ropes. A pigtail is a loop of low-tensile-strength used to tie in lead ropes when linking mules into a string. We recommend making a permanent, unbreakable pigtail by eye-splicing to both rigging rings with a loop feeding out through the rear D-ring. You can then add a “breakable” loop four to six inches long that is looped into the end of the permanent pigtail. Use inexpensive quarter-inch manila or hemp for your breakaways. These are quickly replaced from a supply you can carry in your saddle bags but strong enough to keep your stock moving along in the string. A pigging string with a breakaway is also useful on your riding saddle so a rider can get off and walk and still control the pack string.

Sling ropes, or “swing” ropes, are attached to the front D-rings and put up on the rear D-rings. Many packers prefer a three-strand composite rope that is easy to grip, durable, lightweight and has a supple feel. Sling ropes should be 24 to 28 feet long (33 feet in length would give you extra length in case of an emergency) and 1/2 inch in diameter. The rope is eye-spliced on one end and back spliced on the other.



Pigtail Breakaway



Sling Ropes (2)

Material: 3-strand poly composite

Size: 1/2 inch diameter; 24-28 feet long

Putting up Sling Ropes (unloaded)

There are different techniques to putting up the sling ropes after unloading. One common method is to make long loops back and forth through the rear D-ring of the saddle. The loops should extend to two or three inches below the bottom of the half-breed. The series of loops is then tied off with a half-hitch (over-hand knot). Each side is put up separately, but both sides are put up on the rear D-ring.



Another method, once mastered, can be very fast and efficient and is a “fail safe” with regards to the rope coming loose unexpectedly. Pull the loop of the basket hitch across from the front D-ring to the rear D-ring and over the running end of the sling rope. Shorten the loop to about two or three inches below the half-breed. Flip a small loop over the rear D-ring with the running end of the sling rope, then pull a loop through the rear D-ring and pull this loop

down to where it is about one inch shorter than the previous loop. Continue this process until all but two to three feet of the sling rope is up. Tie off the loops the same way as mentioned above.

Sling ropes up on saddle-2nd Method



Unsaddling-Putting up the Decker Saddle

To put up the rigging of a Decker when not in use, place the back pad and the breeching neatly on the saddle between the D-rings. Flip the girth up from the off-side; thread the breast collar through the front D-ring, through the cinch ring on the girth, over the back pad and breeching and out the rear D-ring. The latigo can simply be draped across the top of the saddle or looped through the front D-ring. Stored this way, the saddle can be easily carried and swung onto the animal's back.



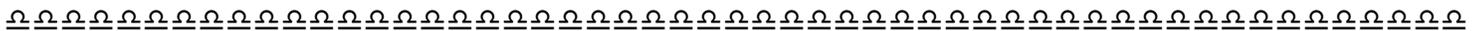
MANTIED LOADS

How Much Can My Horse or Mule Carry?

The typical rule of thumb is that stock in good physical condition can carry approximately 20 percent of their body weight. When calculating your loads keep in mind the weight of the saddle is about 40 pounds. A mule weighing 1,000 pounds can carry 160 pounds, or 80 pounds per side. You may also want to consider your height, the mule's height, the type of terrain you are going to be traveling (very steep or flat) and the length of your trip.

Load Shape and Size

The benefit of using mantied loads is it allows you to pack many different shapes, lengths and sizes of gear, while panniers restrict items to the fixed size of the pannier. The overall size and "bulk" of the load should be considered and a load that is approximately 16 inches deep, by 22 inches wide, by 34 inches long makes for a good standard to use. When building loads of loose gear, try to put the heaviest item(s) one-third of the way down from the top of the load, and one-third of the way out from the back of the load. This will put the heaviest part of the load on the tree of the saddle, thus allowing the animal to carry the load better on his back. Also remember to arrange items that are fragile or expensive (ex. bread or eggs) so they are protected and won't get smashed!



Recommended Equipment



Manties (2)

Material: 12-18 ounce untreated canvas (14-16 preferred)

Size: 7' X 7' or 7' X 8'

Dual purpose in camp: cook tarps, wind screens, saddle covers, ground sheets, blankets, rain barrier, keep foods cooled when soaked in creek water



Manty Ropes (2)

Material: 3-strand poly composite

Size: 3/8 inch diameter; 30-35 feet long

Dual purpose in camp: corrals, clothes lines, hanging food supplies



Fixed blade knife with sheath-easily accessible on your belt



How to Manty

Before you begin keep some things in mind. You want the loads to be within five pounds of each other. Each item should be matched with an item of equal weight on the other manty. You need an idea of the shape of the finished load. Although mantying allows considerable freedom in shaping the load, the height of the pack animal and the design of the pack saddle impose practical limits.

Finally, don't forget how you are going to distribute the weight, remembering the 1/3 down and 1/3 out rule of thumb. Weight at either end exerts leverage which accentuates sway. This sounds like a contradiction since equal loads will always balance on a scale-but not on a mule or horse. If a mantied load with the weight on the bottom is loaded on a mule's left side and a load of equal weight but with the weight concentrated at the top is loaded on the right side, the saddle will sag to the left. The ideal manty is about 36 inches long, 22 inches wide, and 16 inches thick-think of a bale of hay.

Step 1: Unfold two manties. Step back as you drop getting as flat as you can.

Step 2: Arrange gear/cargo along the diagonal. If packing loose duffle/gear start with something soft that will be against the animal if possible. Make sure to have your manty rope either in your belt loop or next to your manty. Fold bottom corner up over load. (**Note:** Do not step on manty if at all possible - pick up the corner and move in to place loads)

Step 3: Take edge of the manty about 8 inches from the corner and pull slightly up and forward to create a smooth, tight corner at the bottom edge.

Step 4: While holding the corner tight, grab the same edge with your other hand about 18 inches out and pull up and back toward your body and opposite corner. Repeat process on other side; tuck the excess canvas under, even with the edge of the load.

Step 5: Straddle the load facing the top and form a rain flap on the top of the load by tucking each side in slightly and then folding the remaining right sides to shed rain. Fold pointed tip under to create a "clean" look that resembles an envelope. This flap will indicate the top of your load.

Step 6: Holding the eye splice end of the manty rope throw the rest away from the bottom of the load. Form a loop big enough to go around the load's long axis. Tilt the load slightly on one long edge so that you can center this loop along the back and positioning the eye on the top edge facing you. Then pull this loop tight and hold the tension. Your eye splice may move over the edge and down the load just a bit



Step 2.



Step 3.



Step 4.
18"



and that's ok. **Your're going to pull tight after every step, remove all the slack and keep it as tight as possible at all times.**

Step 7: Now you need to put three half hitches around the pack. (If your load is short or solid, you may only need two half hitches, but three is better) Some packers like to put one on and then turn around and finish the other two, or two on and turn to finish the third. There is no right or wrong, just personal preference. You may want to reverse every other half hitch so it tightens from alternate sides (photo a).



Step 5.



The hitches should center themselves when tightening. (**NOTE:** The hitches must be removed from the same end they were put on or you will end up with a knot in your manty rope)

Step 8: After tightening the last half hitch, roll the load onto it's side and wrap the loose end of the manty rope around the bottom, across the center of the back and to the top of the load. Stand the pack up by lifting on the manty rope and rest the pack on your legs. Give the load a few pulls to tighten everything one last time.

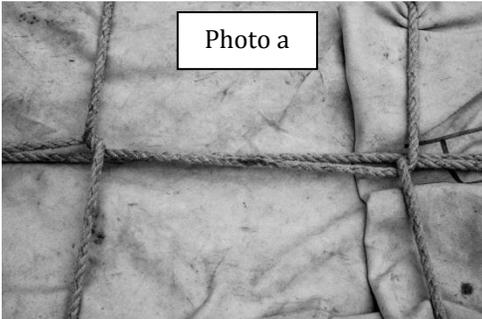


Photo a

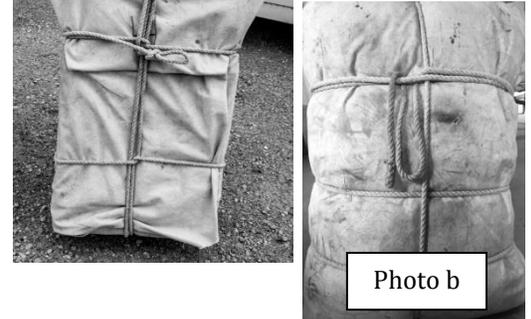


Photo b

Step 9 (below L-R): Secure the load with one final hitch. There are many variations, but be sure to use one that is quick and easy to untie. If you have any excess rope you can wrap to the back and pull down through the manty ropes, or take another loop longways around the load for extra support if needed (photo b).



Soft Duffle/Gear Knot

Begin horizontally to hold loose gear in place. Be sure to pull this first hitch tight and secure knot with a half-hitch (last photo) before continuing on with your other two or more hitches. →



Coiling up Manty Ropes

Hold the eye splice in your hand with a loop hanging down about 18-20 inches. Begin to make additional loops, slightly smaller than the first one, and hold them in your hand. When you reach the end of the rope reach down and find the longest loop. Bring it up and around the other shorter loops and pass the end through the small opening at the top of the coils to your other hand. This will keep your ropes in an orderly fashion and ready to hang on a peg or on a tree stub!

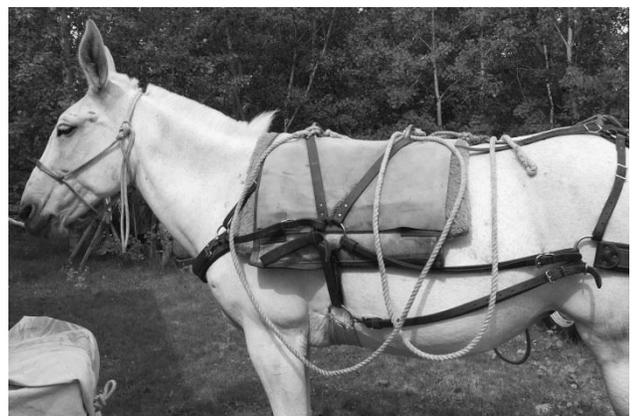


The Basket Hitch

Step 1: Begin loading by placing the loads in front of the pack horse or mule so he can see what you're about to put on him. Give your cinch one last check - tight, but not too tight.



Step 2: Pull down your sling ropes. Shape the rope in a loop big enough for your load and put excess rope on the neck and rump of animal to keep it off the ground and out from underneath your feet.



Step 3: Starting with the off-side, place the load on the animal with heaviest part resting on the saddle tree and centered between the D rings. Work the loop up around the bottom of the load so that it crosses the heaviest point. Tighten the loop by pulling down on the loose end of the sling rope.

Step 4: Once the loop is tight, bring the loose end up and tie off the sling rope where it crosses the load. Don't tie to the manty rope! Use the shown quick release knot and half hitch to tie off the load. (**Tip:** Before you make your final tightening by shifting load forward and backward



and pulling down loose end of rope, run your rope over and under the horizontal loop first. Sometimes it gets so tight that it's hard for you to push the rope down through, especially on solid loads and if you are short and animal is tall!(See photo far right)

Step 5: Put up extra sling ropes on the front and rear D-rings.



Basket Hitch Tie Off



WHEN FINISHED: When both loads are on, rock them from side to side a few times; then see if the D-rings center along the animal's back. You can adjust the balance by raising or lowering if needed. Another option is to put your shovel, saw or ax on the lighter side. When the loads are balanced, the D-rings will center on the pack animal's back.

Your loads are now ready to swing back and forth should your animal hit a tree. On hills, the loads swing forward or back aiding in the mule's or horse's balance. The only time you want to tie down a basket hitch is when you're traveling in country where your stock is forced to jump and lunge, for example in deep, drifted snow, bogs or downed timber, or perhaps if creek crossing are too deep and the animal is forced to swim.



REMOVING LOADS: When arriving to your destination you can simply undo the half hitch and pull sling rope loose, tip your basket hitched load towards the animal's shoulder, (this loosens the loop) and allow it to gently go to the ground and set aside. You don't need to undo the loose ends of the ropes that are carried on the D-rings first. This allows you quickly take care of the pack animal(s) first. You should then loosen the cinch slightly and allow animals to cool off and relax before unsaddling.



Pigtail Tie

This knot is used to tie animals together if you have more than one pack animal, or if you need to attach your pack animal to your saddle horse so you can walk the trail. (**Note:** Never tie your pack animal to your saddle horse while riding; always hold lead rope in your hand-gloves recommended)



Form a loop with lead rope and put through breakaway



Gather running end of rope and loop together

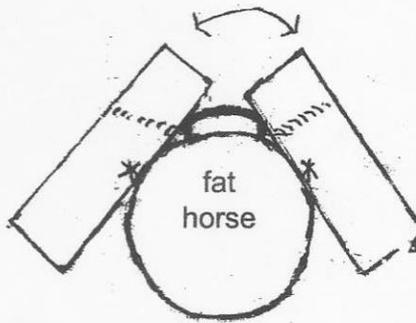


Put a half hitch around the loop and running end

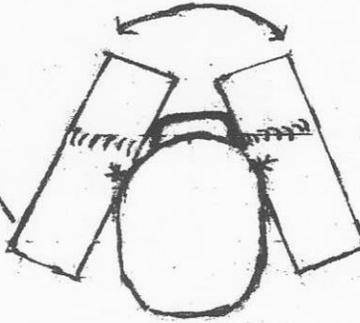
The length of the lead rope should be just long enough for your pack animal to get a drink, or barely touching the ground. If too long, you take the risk of them getting a front leg over the rope or possibly your saddle horse to get a back leg over the rope. For animals that tend to try and pass the mule in front of them you can put a "bridge rope" across the rings in your hip pad and run your pigging string under/through that. This helps keep your rope off the ground. (Sisal rope backspliced to form bridge)



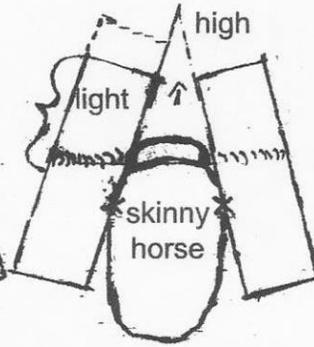
Shapes and Balance



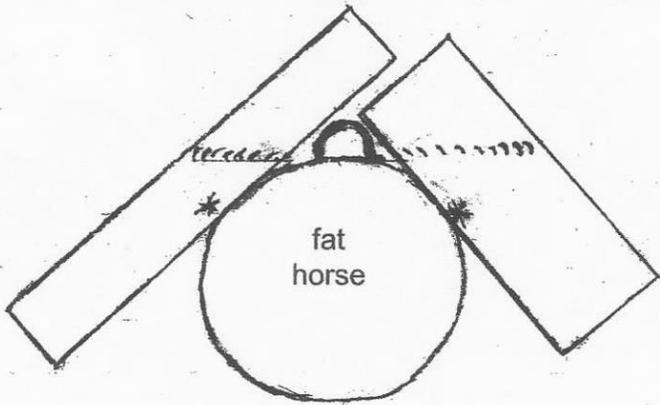
Wide D good on round wide horses



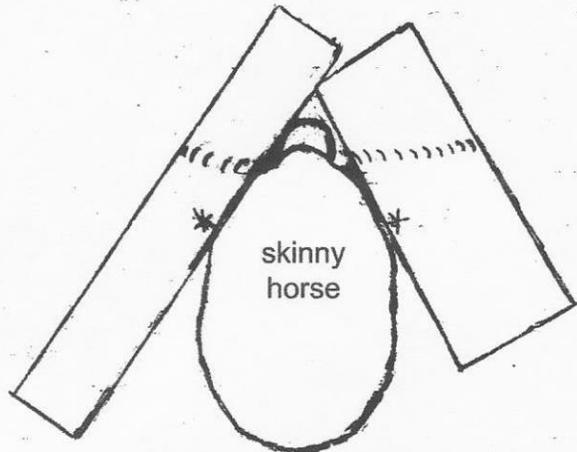
Good packs



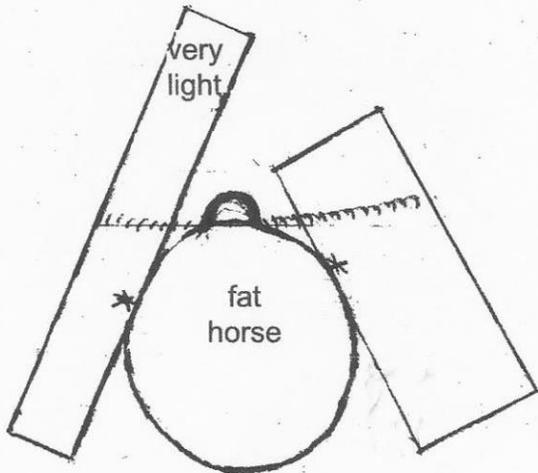
Tall pack with very light top



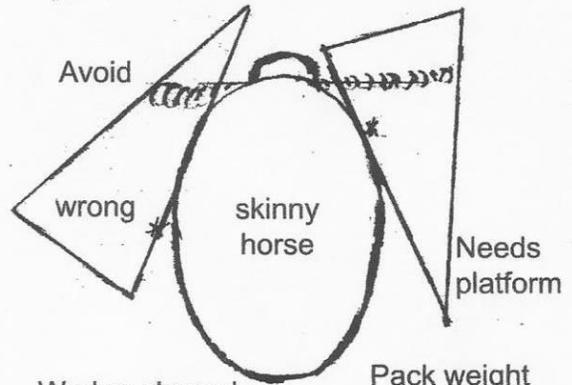
Load too wide on the bottom



"A" shape is ideal.



Narrow D allows more pack adjustment on any size or shape horse or load.



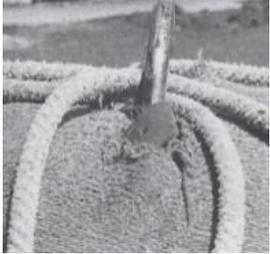
Wedge-shaped pack will slip through sling. Load will be lost.

Pack weight will tighten sling.

Illustrations by June Burgau.

The Barrel Hitch

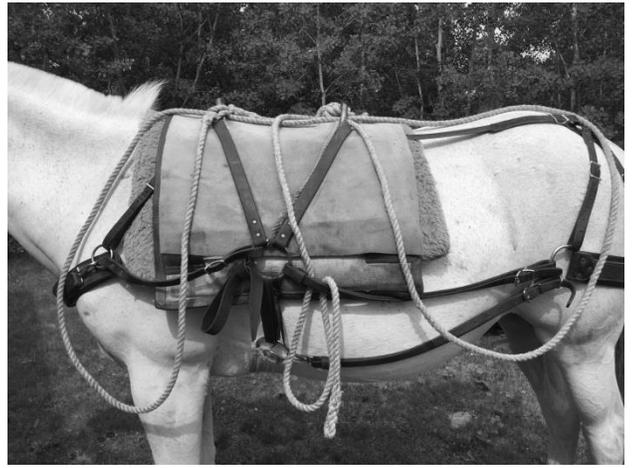
The barrel hitch is another very simple hitch, but it takes a little more time to adjust and tie than the basket hitch. The principle use of this hitch is in packing pointed or odd shaped objects that lack a blunt surface adequate to hold the bottom rope of a basket hitch. Hindquarters of elk, barrels, fence posts and poles or rounds of firewood are good examples.



See the photo of the correct sling rope arrangement. Before you load this hitch, be sure that when the loose end of the rope comes back through the rear D-ring after forming the final loop, it runs **on top of the section of rope coming from the front D-ring**. If it doesn't, you may have trouble adjusting the rear loop.

The heavy end of the load goes in the front loop, and the rainflap of the manty goes in against the half-breed. The front end of the load should be one to two inches higher than the back, and the back should not extend beyond the rear edge of the half-breed or it will rub the pack animal's hip. You want the weight carried on the tree of the saddle. Tighten the sling loops until the load is against the D-rings, leave them loose enough so that the top of the load hangs level with the top of the saddle or the base of the D-rings.

The barrel hitch can be tied down. Once the load is placed correctly, bring the loose end of the sling rope up from beneath the load and thread it under the section of sling rope where it runs between the two D-rings. Now go to the lash ring on the girth if there is one; if there isn't, you can thread the rope through the outer wrap of the latigo. If you are short, or your sling rope is, you can tie off here with a quick-release knot or tie off to the center of the pack. Another option is to take the rope back over the load and tie between the two D-rings.





The Decker Diamond

This hitch is used when packing with panniers and a top pack. The advantage is that the top pack can be tied on with the existing sling ropes on the saddle and that it also lifts the packs up and off the animal's rib cage allowing it to breathe better by pulling the weight up onto the bars.

Step 1: Set ropes as you would a basket hitch and then hang your panniers

Step 2: Load the top pack and pull the basket loop under and around the pannier, taking the loop all the way up and over the top pack.

Step 3: Pull on the running end of the rope from the bottom and get it tight. Then take it up the outside of the pannier and tie it off the same way you tied the quick-release knot on the basket hitch. Put up loose ends on rings like the basket hitch or on ropes as shown.



Other Useful Equipment

During fire season, May 1 through September 30, Montana state law requires all pack strings to have an axe, a shovel and a bucket. You should also have a saw for any impassable downfall. All bladed tools should be covered. Tools should be carried outside your manties for easy access. They can be laced through manty ropes or hung beneath loads. They can also help balance your loads.



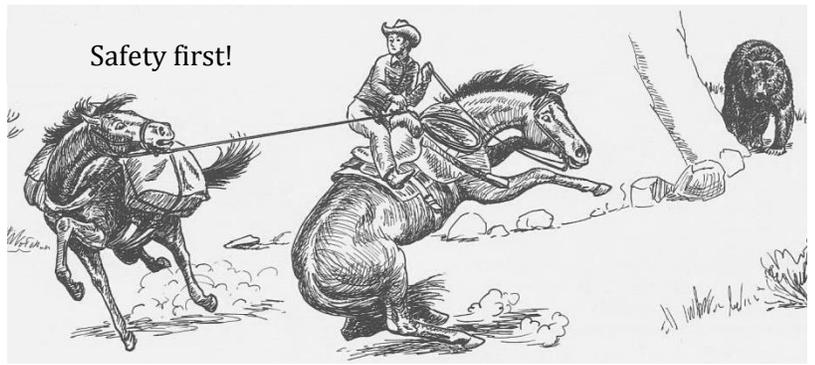
Pack scale for weighing loads



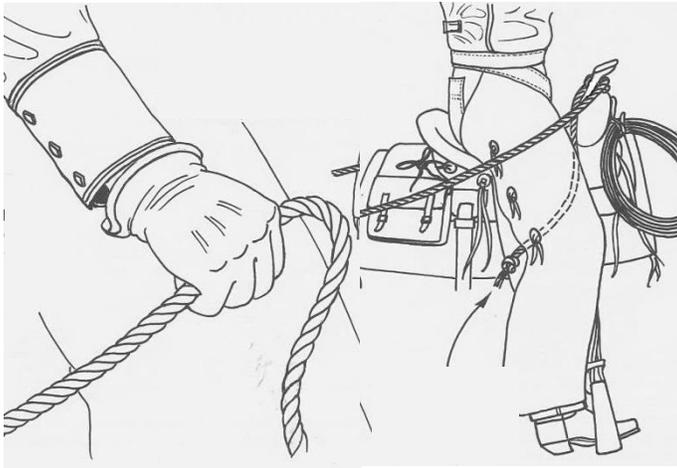
4' Saddle saw hung beneath load

Tips for a New Packer

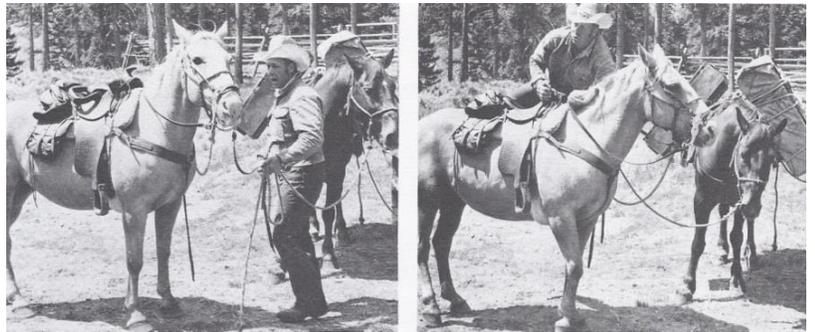
Never tie your pack horse lead rope to your saddle horn! Well trained pack animals should lead easily with a hand held rope.



Never coil lead rope around your hand. If you need both hands free momentarily, you can take one turn around the horn and place end of rope under leg. But don't make this a habit!

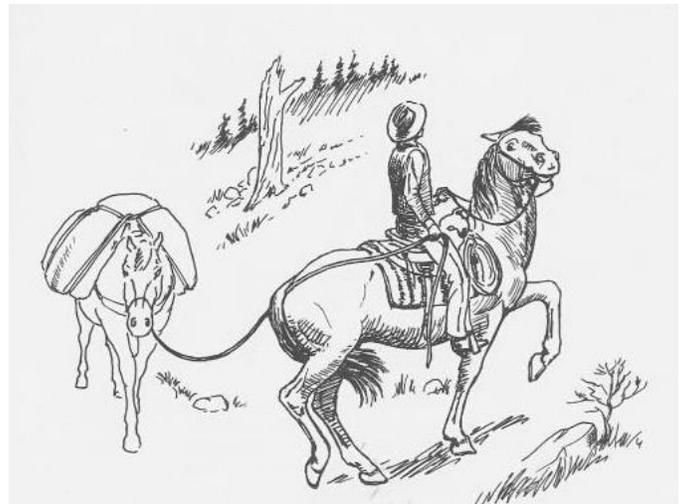


Mount with the lead rope in your left hand to avoid being caught around the waist half-way into the saddle.



Stay alert and pay attention to your animals. The more difficult the terrain, the more time you must spend looking back at your string. Also, you don't want to let the pack animal's lead rope go under your riding horse's tail. Always keep an eye on your loads too for proper balance and position.

The heavier packs go on the larger, stronger horses or mules. Put unbreakable items on the less experienced animals-just in case!



Prepare and practice at home first. Make sure both you and your stock are ready to head into the hills! Use your “Horse Sense” and always keep you and your animals safe.



Don't be shy about talking to your animals. If you move out without waking up the mules dozing at the end of the string, you'll find yourself breaking pigtails. Call out their names when you start your saddle horse.



On a pack trip, the pack animal should receive priority treatment. He should be loaded last, and, when stopping to camp, he should be unloaded first.



Slow down when going through water, over logs and around switchbacks to give animals in the string a chance to keep up. Knowing the “pecking” order of your stock will also help keep them in line.



Keep your halter under your bridle with lead rope attached. Use a quick release knot on your saddle horse's lead rope. See knot below.



Quick Release Knot-Your Riding Horse



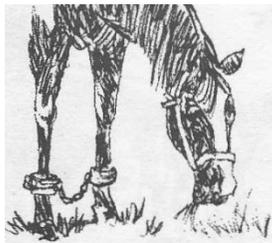


Stock: Keeping Them with You in the Back Country

Your animals are important, so keeping them safe and close by in the back country means you'll have them in the morning to carry your gear! Decide how you will keep your stock tied or corralled, then practice before you ride into the backcountry and make sure your stock is trained and accustomed to your choice. Generally, the less confined your stock is, the less impact there will be on the land. Therefore, loose grazing does the best job for resource preservation. However, turning your stock loose may not be a good choice for you.

Highline Tips:

- ◆ There must be a swivel or your lead rope will become twisted or unraveled as the horse turns around.
- ◆ If the lead is too long the horse may get a leg over the rope or get tangled if it rolls.
- ◆ A saddled animal should not be tied on the highline because damage to the saddle and/or death to the animal could result.
- ◆ Make sure trees are live and big enough to support highline.



Hobbles:

Wandering horse? Hobbles work for some animals, but others can move fast while wearing them. Again, get your stock used to them before going into the backcountry. Hobbles can reduce pawing by tethered stock.

Hobble Tips:

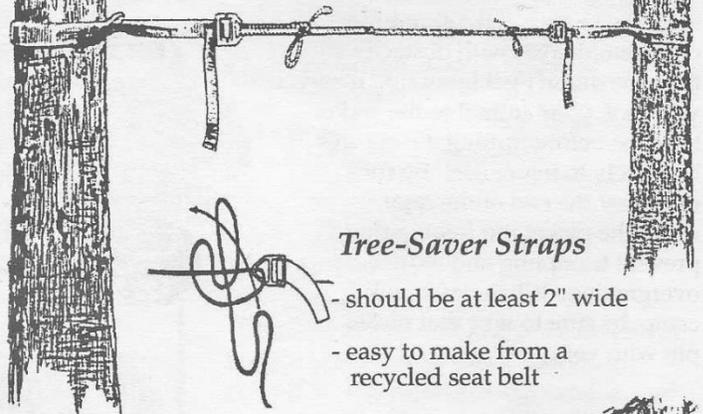
- ◆ Keep well-oiled and soft
- ◆ If not trained properly can sore pasterns/tendons
- ◆ Dangerous in brushy/timbered country
- ◆ Don't leave on overnight on loose horse



Horse Grazing Bell

Used for loose or hobbled stock

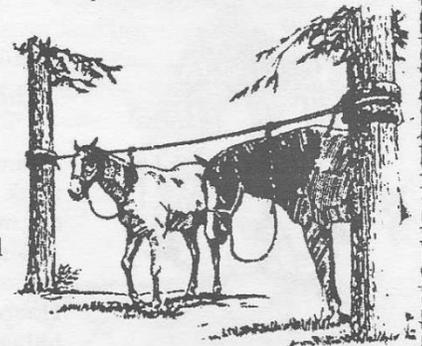
TREE-SAVER STRAPS AND HIGHLINES



Highlines

How to use:

1. Choose a durable spot. Hard and rocky ground is best.
2. Place the tree-savers and rope about 7 feet above the ground.
3. Stretch the line tautly between two trees using adjustable, nylon tree-saver straps.
4. Run the rope between the straps, tie with a quick-release knot, and pull tight.
5. Tie stock to highline about 7 feet apart and at least six feet from the trees.

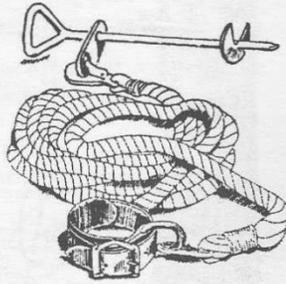


Temporary Fences and Corrals:

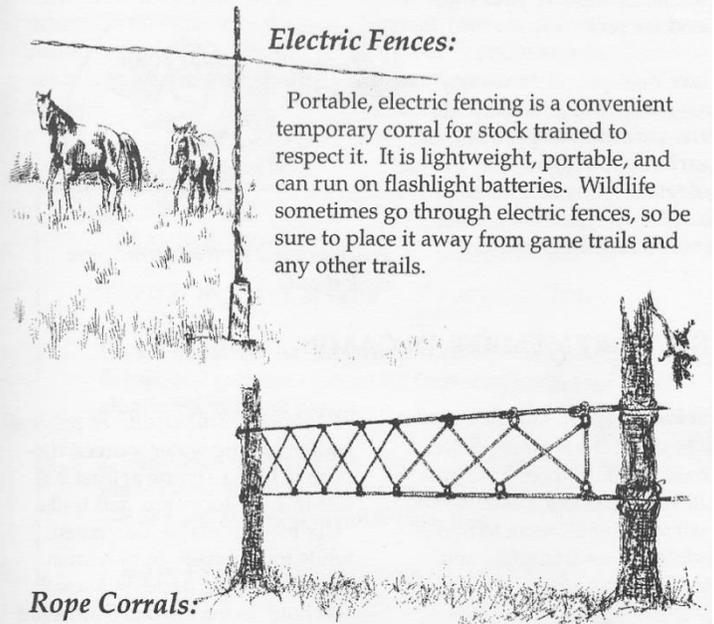
When you plan to spend several days in one place, a temporary corral or fence is a good way to keep your stock in camp. Make sure your stock are trained to stay in temporary corrals before leaving home. If you find permanent corrals at trailheads or designated horse camps, use them! Try some of these temporary fences and corrals (don't forget to take them with you)!

Picket Ropes and Pins:

Bring an easy-to-move picket pin—such as a lightweight aluminum one. Avoid areas with obstacles so the rope doesn't get hung up. If you walk your animal to the end of the rope before turning it loose, it's less likely to injure itself by running past the end of the rope. move the picket pin frequently, to prevent trampling and reduce overgrazing. When you break camp, be sure to take that picket pin with you.



Electric Fences:



Portable, electric fencing is a convenient temporary corral for stock trained to respect it. It is lightweight, portable, and can run on flashlight batteries. Wildlife sometimes go through electric fences, so be sure to place it away from game trails and any other trails.

Rope Corrals:

Rope corrals are pretty easy to rig and move, but they do require extra rope that can be heavy. One method uses two parallel ropes tied with loops or bow-lines and threaded with cross ropes for a more secure enclosure.

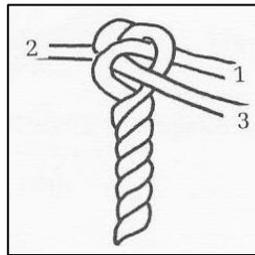
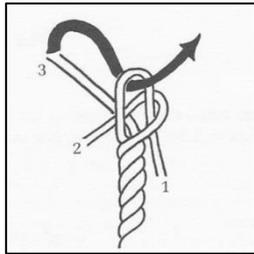
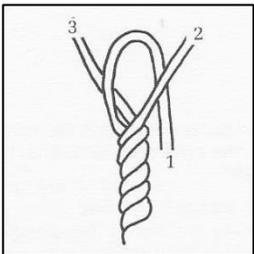


Knots & Hitches

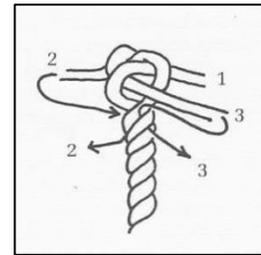
Back Splice

(YouTube videos can be very helpful)

First tie a crown knot



Now weave the splice



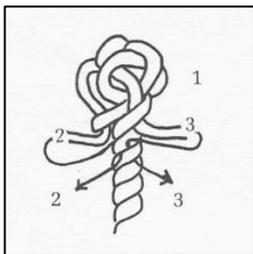
a. Unravel about 3 to 4 inches. Fold center strand (1) down to form loop.

b. Wrap (2) around loop formed by (1). (2) should pass over (3). Pass 3 through the loop formed by (1).

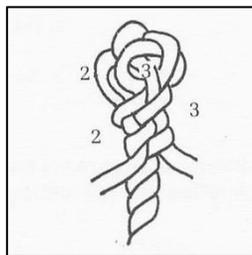
c. Tighten crown knot by tugging each end in turn. Go around several times to keep the knot even.

d. Choose any strand to begin weaving. Lace it over the strand below, under the strand below that and then out. The arrows show this for strands (2) and (3).

Do this for all three strands. If you become confused, notice that a strand goes in between the twists where the strand to the left comes out. Strand (3) goes under where strand (2) comes out.



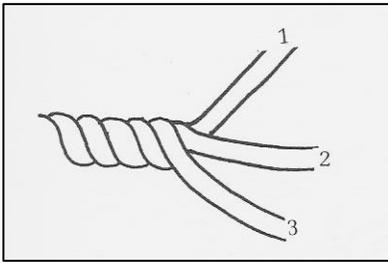
e. The result of d. Strand (1) disappears in back. Repeat at least two more times with all three strands (arrows).



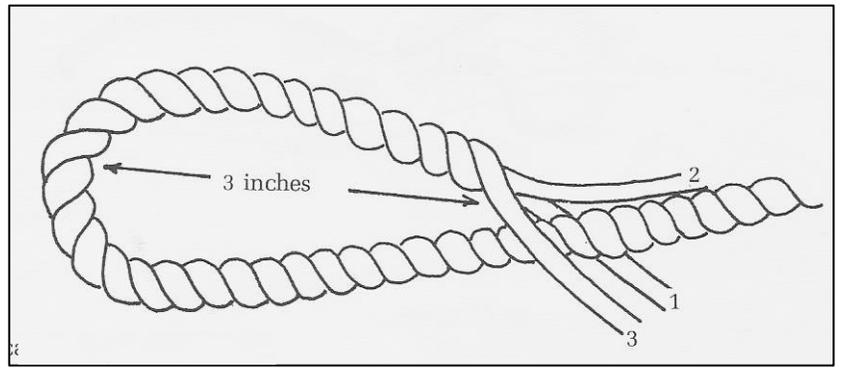
f. Back splice woven through two cycles. One more will complete it.

Roll between your palms to tighten. You can clip loose end for appearance, but leaving them protruding can give you a better grip on the end of a lead rope.

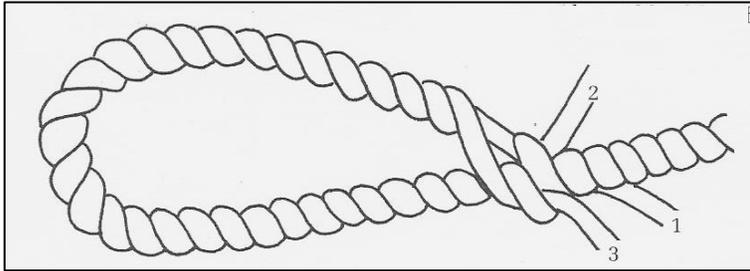
Eye- Splice



a. Unravel three to four inches. One strand (in this case #2) will appear as the center strand.

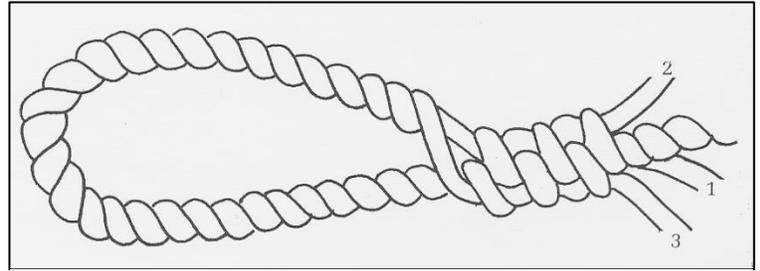


b. Fold over to form an eye. Three to three and a half inches (the width of four fingers) is a good size.



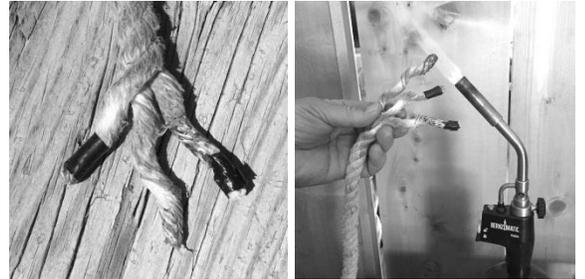
c. Insert the center strand (2) under any twist of the rope. Turn splice 1/3 turn so strand (3) is on the top and thread it under a twist so that it emerges between the two twists between which (2) was inserted

(Not Shown) Turn splice 1/3 turn more so that strand (1) is on top. It should be inserted between the twists where strand (2) emerges and should emerge between the twists where strand (3) goes in. This is the trickiest step. If you get it right the splice will appear symmetrical with all three strands pointing away from the loop and with each emerging between different twists.



d. From c. it is a simple matter to keep working strands alternately over an under the twists below (exactly like the back splice) until step c. has been repeated at least three times.

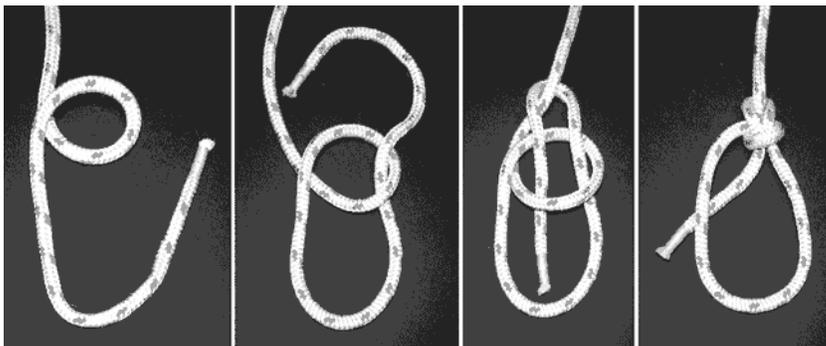
Roll the splice under your boot and trim the remaining ends.



TIP: Wrap with electrical tape or burn to help keep ends fraying while working with rope

Bowline

(Universal knot-will not over-tighten & can always be untied)



Remember the rabbit story? Well, the end of the rope is the rabbit! The beginning loop is his hole in the ground. Rabbit comes up through the hole and around the back of the tree (long end of the rope) and back down into his hole. Now hold the small loop and bunny in one hand, and the tree in the other, and gently pull tight!

DID YOU KNOW? A **knot** is used to join two ropes together or a rope to itself. A **hitch** is used to fix a rope to another object, such as a carabiner or pole, and relies on that object to hold.

Horse Rope Halter



Fit your rope halter properly. The nose piece is high on the nose, knots in proper place and jaw piece runs behind jaw, not across cheek. Note that tail end points back and down.

If tail end is long tuck it down through jaw piece.

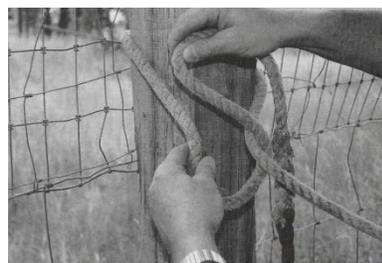
Improper fit

HORSE TYING TIPS: Use a quick release knot and something that will hold for hours but will still untie should your 1000 pound horse pull against it; **Never** tie with your reins; Proper height is chin high or slightly higher when animal is standing normal & relaxed; Proper rope length between knot and animal is the distance from the ground to horse's chin when standing relaxed; always tie to a sturdy object

Common Horse Tie

(Bob Hoverson demonstrates from his book "The Field Packer's Guide")

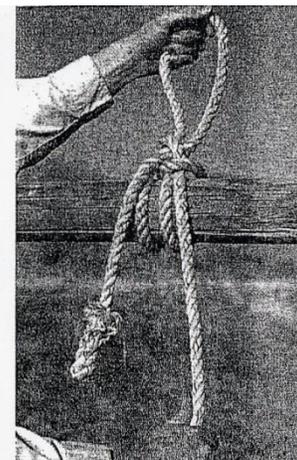
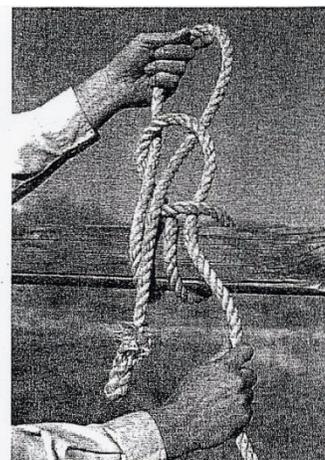
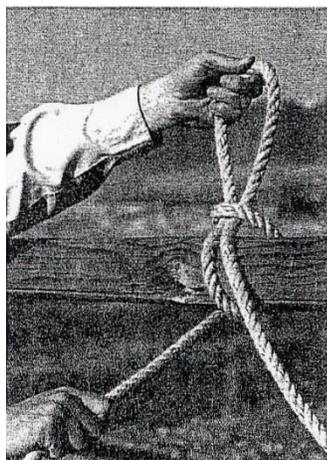
Wrap the halter rope around a solid object and make a "figure 4". Leaving a loop in the running end of the halter rope (working end is attached to the halter), tie a simple knot around the halter rope. Push the knot up tight against the post or rail. Turn a half-hitch around the loop from the working end of the halter rope. This will keep the knot from getting too tight should the animal pull back.



Bank Robber's Knot

WESTERN HORSEMAN July 2008
Bob Hoverson demonstrates

HOW TO TIE: Double the lead rope and lay it across the rail. Wrap the running end under the rail and around the doubled body to create a loop. Double the running end again and pass it through the rope's original loop. Trap the doubled end against the rail by pulling the original loop taut.



Additional Back Country Basics

Human and Equine First Aid (Safety Kits)

First Aid Kits vary but should be a part of your essential packing equipment. You'll have a better one if you put it together yourself rather than buying a pre-assembled one. It is even more important to know how to use the contents. Educate yourself on general equine medical conditions such as colic, wounds, rope burns/saddle sores, eye injuries, bleeding, tying up and snake bites/bee stings. Also be prepared for human conditions and injuries. Always let your riding partners know if you or your stock have any health issues!

Here are some recommended items you should consider taking: (many items can be used for either)

HUMAN

Human pain killer (Ibuprofen, Tylenol)
Water proof container or Zip Lock Bag
Band-Aids, assorted sizes/Butterfly patch
Sterile gauze & pads
1 roll adhesive tape (1" minimum width)
Moleskin (for blisters)
Iodine solution (wound cleanser)
Ace bandage
Eye patch
Q-tips (remove foreign objects from eye/wounds)
Soap
Triple Antibiotic Ointment
Instant cold compress
Hydrocortisone ointment
Diarrhea stop/Milk of Magnesia tablets
Scissors (capable of cutting bandage)
Tweezers/Safety pins
Insect repellent
Bee sting swab
Sunscreen
Antihistamine (Benadryl)
3 pair Synthetic protective gloves
Space blanket/Splints

EQUINE

Equine pain killer (Bute or Banamine-paste or tabs)
Penicillin
Vet wrap or Self-Adherent wrap
Duct tape
Hoof boot
1 roll Gauze (2" min. width)
Cotton padding (leg injuries)
Absorbent Compress (Diapers/Kotex pads)
2 Flexible Stretch Adhesive/Cohesive Bandages
4" Sterile Wound Dressing
Saline or eye wash
Betadine scrub
Corona/Vetericyn/AluShield
Blood stop
Thermometer/Stethoscope
Needles/Syringes/Forceps/Suture set
Pliers or nippers (to pull nails on shoe)
Snakebite Kit
Sewing kit
Equine Insect repellent
Digital Thermometer
Petroleum Jelly

Campsites & Camping Tips

-  As a packer your first obligation is to your stock –ample grass and convenient water?
-  Is your site durable and allow you to preserve the resource without much damage?
-  Lastly, is it comfortable for you? Are there sheltered, well-drained tent sites and abundant firewood?

3 Important Factors:

- #1. Your obligation to your animals**
- #2. "Light on the Land"-keeping the integrity of the wilderness**
- #3. Personal comfort (a distant 3rd)**

Advice for planning your pack trip:

- ◆ Plan and ask others in advance (talk to other packers, Forest Service rangers and/or read guidebooks)
- ◆ Take along a good map/compass/GPS
- ◆ Be organized enough to allow enough time to get to your chosen site
- ◆ Have a campsite in mind and also have a backup
- ◆ Travel short days if your trip and campsites are unknown and take the first acceptable site by 3:00 pm
- ◆ Research the site: good grasses are Native fescue, wheat grass, blue grasses & timothy (introduced by hay/manure); Give some thought to wildlife: Try to avoid open south-facing slopes of grass and shrubs at low elevation. In late summer, the grass on north and east slopes will be better and worthless to wildlife in winter.
- ◆ You will find better feed in the late summer/early fall by going a mile or two off the main routes
- ◆ Access to water
- ◆ Never camp near another party - be courteous
- ◆ **Should not** camp: mossy- shored lakes (200 foot rule); small wooded glades; high alpine; occupied sites
- ◆ Tent sites: level & slightly elevated (never in a ditch); away from dead trees and base of cliffs - look up!



Other Important Tips:



- ◆ Locate kitchen area near water and firewood. Nice, but not essential; you can use your pack horse to haul wood.
- ◆ Shade, shelter from wind and a safe place for a stove/ fire are important
- ◆ Try to find good spot to water stock downstream that won't damage a bank; low gravel banks or a ford
- ◆ Pick a good location for picket or highline area-away from trails and campsite; rocky areas/lodge pole thickets good
- ◆ When getting to camp, go directly to highline/picket area, tie saddle horses and loosen cinches. Lead the pack stock to the center of camp and unload quickly. As soon as loads are off, take them back to the highline area, loosen cinches, and let them cool off before unsaddling.
- ◆ Stack saddles on a log or rack them on a pole lashed between two trees. Prevent rodents from chewing on leather by stacking on a manty, cover with a plastic tarp and tuck under the manty. Oiling your leather with castor oil will also help protect your tack from gnawing rodents.



Feeding Stock in the Back Country



- ◆ Horses and mules working every day need at least 20-25 pounds of hay a day or an equivalent amount of grass (2% of their body weight).
- ◆ If you are unsure of grazing conditions, and have room, supplement with Certified Weed Seed Free Feed in the form of hay bales, hay cubes, compressed hay or complete feed pellets. Oats can also be packed in.
- ◆ Nose bags are the best way to feed to avoid waste.
- ◆ Accustom your stock to what you will be feeding before you leave home to avoid a chance of colic.
- ◆ Stock needs to feel full to be comfortable - allow them to graze awhile and supplementing with a portion of hay/pellets if possible.
- ◆ Salt - Make sure that you provide a salt source at night so your horse can replenish electrolytes lost in sweat. If the weather is hot and the riding days are long it might be hard for him to get enough from a block. Instead, consider feeding loose salt in a pan or adding 1 tablespoon per 500 pounds body weight to your horse's feed. If you are feeding pellets, salt isn't necessary.



Shoeing Your Horse and Mule

- ◆ Shoe both your horse and mule - the mountains are full of hard rocky ground which can quickly wear off a hoof. Don't wait until the night before you leave. Newly shod horses are often tender footed at first, or you may end up with a slightly high nail which can cause lameness.
- ◆ Decide which type of shoes are best for your animal depending on the season and terrain.
(photos-top is caulked heel and toe; bottom is flat plate)
- ◆ Carry supplies to replace a shoe (if you are capable), or an easy boot to replace a lost shoe. In a pinch, you can use duct tape/gorilla tape with some type of padding over the sole to temporarily get you out of the hills. A cut piece of inner tube can also be duct taped over hoof.
- ◆ Pull shoes and trim before going into winter.



Other Camping Tips

Sanitation

◆ **Toilet needs**-For small groups use the “Light on the Land” method of a cathole 200 feet from the trail and water. Use biodegradable toilet paper, cover and camouflage.

◆ **Dishes/Waste water**-Wash with warm water and soap or detergent. Rinse dishes in hot (boiling) water. Use two basins. Scatter dishwater well away from streams/lakes. Vinegar is a good disinfectant also.

◆ **Bathing**-Smoke’s method: Heat a basin of water and carry it with you to the creek. Leave it, your soap (biodegradable), your wash-cloth and towel on the bank, well back from the water. Then get wet in the stream/lake. Get out, go to the basin of hot water and soap up. Wash everything you plan to wash. Then dump the water over your head. You’re still soapy, so fill the basin with water from the creek. Move back and finish rinsing. When you’re soap free you can go back to the stream for a final dip.

◆ **Garbage**-Burnable garbage should be burned (paper, peelings and left-over food). Aluminum foil doesn’t burn. Bottles and cans (burned out to avoid smells and flatten) should be stored in a heavy plastic garbage bag and packed out.

Miscellaneous Tips:

◆ **DON’T**-Cut live trees; dig unnecessary holes; alter stream beds by building dams to hold drinks, fish or perishables

◆ **Make a cooler**-Food can be kept cold by putting perishables in a wet burlap sack and hanging in a shady place where the breeze will catch it.

◆ **Clean up your camp**-Bury your ashes (make sure completely out); scatter manure; fill in holes made by pawing horses; remove any poles erected for tents/flys; check over completely for any trash; cover any bare spots with litter and brush...leave your camp to look as if no one was there, to the best of your ability!

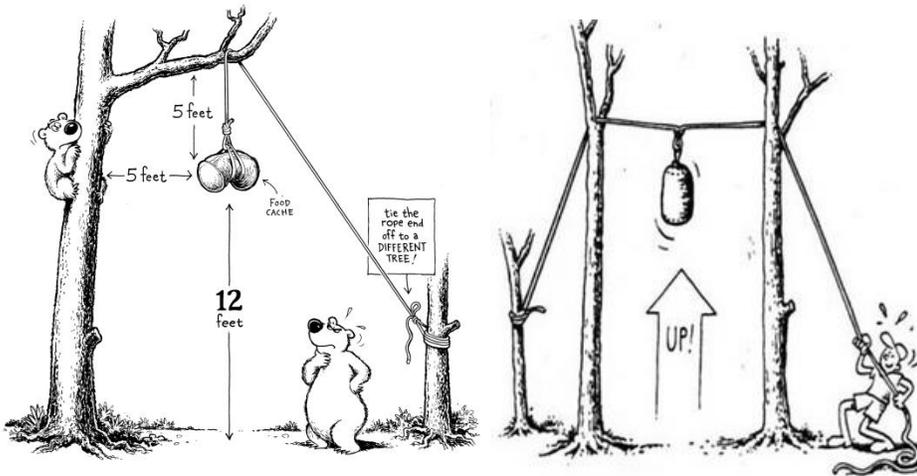
◆ **If your stock has wandered off** -First look for tracks on the trails and try the return trail first. Most of the time, stock that leaves a camp, intent on going somewhere, will leave on the trail and will head back toward the trailhead or previous camp.



More Tips Continued:

◆ **Water**-While the water flowing in the streams and rivers of the backcountry may look pure, it can still be contaminated with bacteria, viruses, parasites, and other contaminants. The best method to treat/purify water for drinking is to boil for 1 minute. Other methods used are filters, purifiers and UV lights.

◆ **Be Bear Aware**-Keep a clean camp; Hang foods when leaving camp and at night; use bear boxes; don't leave camp unattended.



Practice Trail Courtesy

Be courteous, polite and communicate with other users; be helpful

General Guidelines as Packers and Horsemen (customs but not rules - always try to work things out)

◆ Uphill strings have the right-of-way in the morning; downhill strings have the right-of-way in the afternoon.

◆ When two strings meet on the level, the shorter string turns or gets off the trail. If both are the same length, the downhill string turns. Same length on the dead level - flip a coin or be the nice guy! Turning on a narrow trail can be tricky. Turn each mule or horse in place, and then tie your saddle horse to the first mule who led the string. Work backward until the last mule becomes the lead mule. On foot, lead the string back to a place where the other string can pass and you can regroup.

◆ Do not visit on horseback in someone else's camp. Tie outside their camp and walk in.

◆ Ask hikers in a courteous, friendly manner to step off the trail on the downhill side for their safety and yours. Explain that a horse may shy. Also, if you approach a hiker from behind, call out a warning "howdy" as you come up from behind so as not to startle them.

◆ Dismount to visit with hikers if possible.

◆ Cooperate with rangers, land owners and the Forest Service; follow regulations.

BASIC CAMPING LIST

Personal Items List

- Cup/Water bottle
- Slicker/Hat & cover
- Gloves
- Coat
- Chaps
- Rubber boots/gators
- Tent
- Sleeping Bag
- Sleeping Pad/Cot
- Pillow (opt)
- Camp Stool/Chair
- Extra Clothes
- Extra Shoes
- Toiletries
- Hand warmers
- Repellant
- Matches/Fire Starter
- Saw
- Water bottle (filter)
- Toilet Paper
- Solar Shower
- Towel/Wash Cloth
- Leatherman Tool
- Flashlight (batteries)
- Gun/pepper spray
- Sunglasses
- Binoculars
- Camera
- Fishing Pole, Tackle
- Book to Read, Cards
- Maps/Compass/GPS
- Bear spray
- Pocket Knife/Belt knife

Kitchen Equipment List

- Water Filter
- Water Bladder
- Stove
- Propane fuel
- Pots/pans/skillet/griddle
- Coffee (hot water) pot (2)
- Kitchen tools (spatula, knife, cutting board, serving spoons)
- Tongs
- Toothpicks
- Shovel
- Axe
- Cross Cut
- Water Bucket (2)
- Wash Pans (Sink)
- Can opener
- Table
- Lantern (fuel)
- Paper Towels
- Dish soap/hand soap
- Tin Foil
- Matches
- Garbage Bags
- Ziploc bags
- Newspaper/fire starter
- Plates /bowls
- Silverware
- First Aid Kit
- Kitchen Towels/Potholders
- Salt & Pepper
- Oil/Margarine/Butter
- Vinegar (for cleaning)
- Tarp (extra for fly)

Horse List

- Highline/Swivels/Tree Savers
- Hobbles/Picket Stake/Bells
- Feed bag
- Bug Repellant
- Folding rake
- Weed Free Hay/Pellets/Salt
- Riding Saddle/Bridle/Breast collar/Crupper/Halter
- Spurs
- Pack Saddle/Pad/Halter
- Mantys/Panniers
- Saddle bags
- Hoofpick
- Easy boot/shoeing supplies
- Horse Blankets
- Banamine/Bute
- Equine First Aid Kit
- Brush
- Brand Inspections

Food List

This will vary depending on your trip and number of people. Plan menu and create a list for each trip.

- Breakfast -Snacks
- Lunch -Drinks
- Dinner
- ←*****→
- Medications/Vitamins
- Dog food

Leave No Trace-7 Principles

1. Plan Ahead and Prepare
2. Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces
3. Dispose of Waste Properly
4. Leave What You Find
5. Minimize Campfire Impacts
6. Respect Wildlife
7. Be Considerate of Other Visitors

SOURCES

Additional Books on Packing Skills

- ◆ “Packin’ In On Mules and Horses” by Smoke Elser & Bill Brown
- ◆ “The Field Packer’s Manual” by Bob Hoverson
- ◆ “Packing and Outfitting Field Manual” by Oliver C. Hill
- ◆ “Horse Packing in Pictures” by Francis W. Davis
- ◆ “Horse Sense - Packing Lightly on Your National Forests” booklet by USDA & US Forest Service
- ◆ June Burgau-Flathead BCH
- ◆ Rylee Nelson-Darby High School, Darby, MT- Custom Cover Art
- ◆ *Created by Kathy Hundley, Selway-Pintler Wilderness BCH for BCH of MT Youth Program 2019*

IN CLOSING: Smoke Elser and Bill Brown write “Packing is a skill, and if it is not quite an art, it is at least a craft. There are good packers and bad packers. Today, two things set apart the good packer-the way he cares for and uses his stock and the way he treats the land.

A packer’s horses and mules are neither pets nor machines. They are living creatures whose work earns them protection and care. An amateur packer’s animals have no function but to further their owner’s pleasure, and pleasure is the only measure of performance. There is no other; not miles walked, hours or days worked, or money earned. It should be a matter of principle and pride to bring your horses and mules out of the hills in as good or better condition than they went in.

As a horse packer, you are the only wilderness user equipped to leave the mountains cleaner than you found them. It costs almost nothing in time and effort to pack out trash you find in your camps and along the way.”

Done well, packing gives you the pleasure of a partnership between man and animal, allows you to travel into the back country and stay longer and more comfortably, and lets you experience a part of history and tradition. And, when done right...it’s FUN!

