

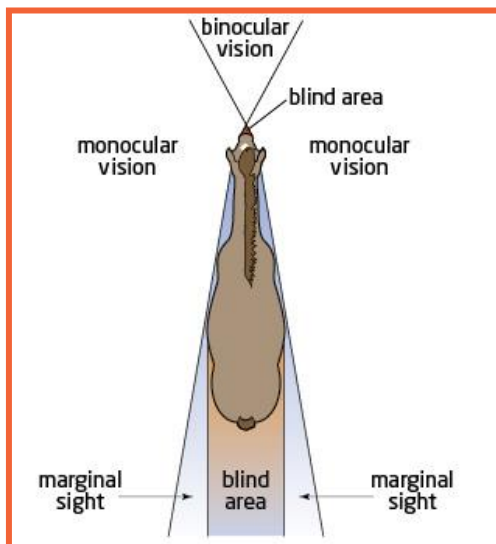
Animal Behavior and Restraint:

Equine

Animal health emergencies involving equine species may require the handling and possibly restraint of the animals. Having a basic understanding of equine behavior can minimize stress on the animals and reduces the risk of injury to responders.

Equine Characteristics

- Equine/Equids: horses, donkeys, mules, burros, etc.
- Equids are grazers and prey animals by nature. Their "fight or flight" reaction is prominent. Their senses are developed to rapidly detect changes in their environment.
- Equids have widely spaced eyes. Large field of peripheral and monofocal (one-eye) vision. Binocular vision in front. Blind spots directly in front (under nose) and directly behind.
- The blind spot behind the animal (light gray) should be avoided.

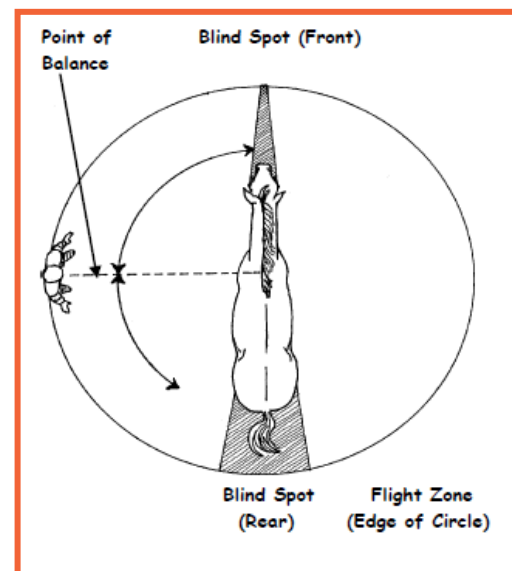


- Equids have a strong herd instinct. They will group together and follow the herd leader. Animals isolated will be anxious and can be very dangerous and may charge at people or injure itself trying to rejoin the herd. Mares will protect their young; avoid separating mare-foal pairs.
- Body language can provide insight/warning.
 - Both ears back: Angry, threatened, warning
 - Tail swishing: Agitated
 - Ears forward: listening, attentive

Flight Zone

An animal's flight zone is their personal space. It is used as an indicator of impending threats. When something moves into the flight zone, the animal will move away. This can aid in the movement of animals or herds. The size of the flight zone is determined by the animal's tameness, fear or stress.

- Determine the edge of an animal's flight zone. Slowly walk up to the animal, the edge is the point the animals begins to move away.
- Handler should be positioned at the point of balance (perpendicular to the animals' shoulder).
- To move the animal forward, move into the flight zone behind the "point of balance".
- To move the animal backwards, move into the flight zone in front of the point of balance.
- Deep invasion into the flight zone can cause panic.



Source: American Youth Horse Council. Approaching a Horse Safely at <http://ayhc.com/uploads/approaching-a-horse-safely-2011.pdf>

Collective Flight Zone

- Moving a herd can be done by using the same principles for the "collective" flight zone.

Handling and Moving Equine

- When handling equids, most injuries occur because of a lack of understanding of equine behavior. Chasing the animals will result in agitated, stressed animals.
 - Use slow, deliberate movements.
 - Use the flight zone to direct movement.
 - Avoid: Abuse, loud noises, yelling, isolating animals and distractions.

Methods of Restraint

Restraint may be needed for diagnostic sampling (e.g., blood collection) or vaccination or treatment. There are many ways to restrain equine depending on their familiarity with human contact. The method of restraint will depend on available resources, the number of handlers present, and the behavior or agitation level of the animal.

- **Halter and Lead Rope** – This is a common form of restraint, but is dependent upon having something to which the animal can be secured.
- **Halter with Chain Lead Shank** – This is commonly used when handling stallions.
- **Stocks/Chute with Head Restraint** – A good restraint method if minimal movement is required.
- **Hobbles** – Put on equid legs can keep them from moving, while still allowing them to eat grass.
- **Twitch** – A nose twitch made of soft rope can be wrapped around the end of the animal's nose to keep it still.
- **Tranquilization/Sedation** – May be needed for situations requiring maximal restraint.
- **Stalls or Corrals** – can be used to contain equine but allow full movement of the animal or herd.

Special Considerations

- Avoid moving equine under hot conditions
 - Move them in early morning or late evening
 - Provide water and breaks often
- Use caution when moving in cold conditions
 - Monitor for slick or icy surfaces
 - Use gritty, non-slip, non-toxic material to improve traction
- Responder safety: Be aware of potential injuries from equine
 - Bites, kicks, foreleg strikes, rearing, crushing
 - Animals may run over you when desperate
 - Always have an escape route in view

Things to Avoid to Prevent Injury

- **Separating mare-foal pairs** – An equine mare can get extremely agitated and aggressive while protecting her young. Handlers could get injured if they come between a mare and her foal.
- **Sudden movements in an equine's blind spot** – This can cause the animal to either panic and kick or to run away possibly causing injury to the animal or the handler.
- **Cornering isolated animals** – Equids separated from their herd can become extremely nervous, fearful or agitated, increasing the risk of panic or striking out.
- **Abuse, loud noises, noisy machinery** – These can all startle equids and may cause panic either in individual animals or throughout the herd.
- **Distractions while trying to move cattle** – Things like patches of light and dark, rattling chains, or flapping clothing will cause equine to "spook". If a handler attempts to force the animals past the distraction, they will get increasingly stressed and may injure themselves or the handler.
- **Wire fencing** – A stressed, excited, or frightened equine may run through wire fencing, inflicting injury upon itself.

Additional Resources

- Approaching a Horse Safely. American Youth Horse Council.
<http://ayhc.com/uploads/approaching-a-horse-safely-2011.pdf>
- Approaching, Catching, and Haltering Horses Safely. Rutgers Cooperative Extension.
http://nasdonline.org/static_content/documents/1043/d00837.pdf
- Techniques for Safely Handling Horses. Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service.
<http://pods.dasnr.okstate.edu/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-2755/E-960.pdf>

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