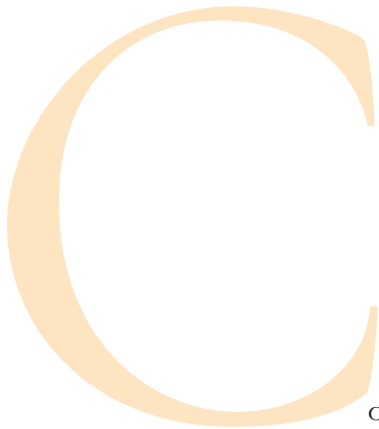


Curb Your Enthusiasm

By Dennis

Moreland

Curb straps and chains are an integral part of the bridle.



CURB STRAPS or chains send very important signals to the horse. When a rider picks up on the reins, a shank bit will begin to rotate in the horse's mouth. Then the curb will come up against the horse's chin and stop the bit action. It says "Whoa."

Whatever kind of curb you use, it's important to have it adjusted correctly. If you're using a curb chain, make sure the links are laying flat. And you'll want to adjust it so you can get a couple of fingers underneath it. If it's too loose, the bit shanks will be able to come all the way back before the curb ever touches the horse. And if it's too tight, it can pull the bit shanks forward.

1. There are a variety of curbs on the market, and probably the most popular is a two-buckle curb chain with leather on each side. This one has stainless-steel buckles and a stainless-steel chain. It's a good all-around piece of tack and is very easy on the horse.

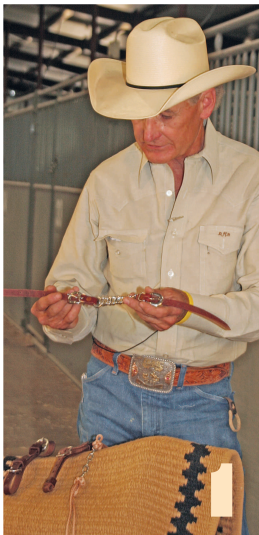
2. The "dog chain curb" is also very popular. It's a small chain with nylon tie strings. It is more severe than the flat curb chain. You'll fasten these onto the bit with bowline knots,

just like you use to tie a rope halter. (See the November-December issue of *America's Horse* for detailed instructions.) There is a safety issue with these curb chains; when you put one on your bridle, be sure to check it the first few times you ride. Once the knots are pulled down good, they will be set, but sometimes they'll slip at first.

3. The two-buckle leather curb strap is very mild, and a lot of times, people use these on young horses who are just being introduced to a shank bit.

4. The one-buckle leather curb strap is used on snaffle bits. It actually doesn't have any curb action and never touches the horse's chin. Its only purpose is to keep the snaffle-bit rings from being pulled through the horse's mouth. Make sure the curb strap is put on the bit below the reins. (Note the pieces of garden hose on the reins. I use these as martingale stops.) ■

AQHA member Dennis Moreland has been making quality working tack since 1976. Visit www.dmtack.com to learn more about his Dennis Moreland Second Edition line.



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