

By Ruthann Smith
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Simple things can make all the difference to the lives of horses and owners. In this new monthly series, I am delighted to share easy tips to avoiding problems. May they save you lot of heartache.

Hazards of Buckets, Hooks and Snaps

Hydration

Buckets are important: if a horse is dehydrated, all his body functions are disabled. Keep plenty of clean water available to make

sure your horse drinks lots of water. To encourage drinking, wipe and empty buckets daily - twice when it's really hot. Soap

and scrub buckets weekly. Hang buckets in the front of the stall, so the horse will think to drink. If he does not drink as much as normal: heads up. He is sick, or almost. When shipping, make sure the horse drinks at least every six hours. He may need to wait a minute first. On the road, put apple juice, cider vinegar or Dengi in the water to make it irresistible. At home, such additives will ferment and prevent him from drinking. Always have at least one full bucket of clean water available in the stall and if outside for hours.

Bucket Position

Some horses eat out of low-to-the-ground rubber tubs. They offer a natural feeding position and the tubs work well for being soft and not having a handle. However, they should be removed after each feeding and washed weekly.

Indoors, water is usually served in hanging buckets because they don't get knocked over. Never serve water in a bucket with a handle on the ground. A horse will put his foot through the handle and get seriously hurt. Larger vessels may be secure, but are not efficient for daily cleaning. So, water buckets are hung in stalls with the bottom at least as high

Safekeeping

Daily practices to avert injuries

Snap tips to prevent injury:

- Buy brass. Chrome snaps break easily, promoting injury.
- Choose small double-ended snaps. They are less apt to twist around the screw eye.
- Avoid open hooks, even if the opening is toward the wall.
- Closed climber-style clasps can break easily, defeating the purpose.

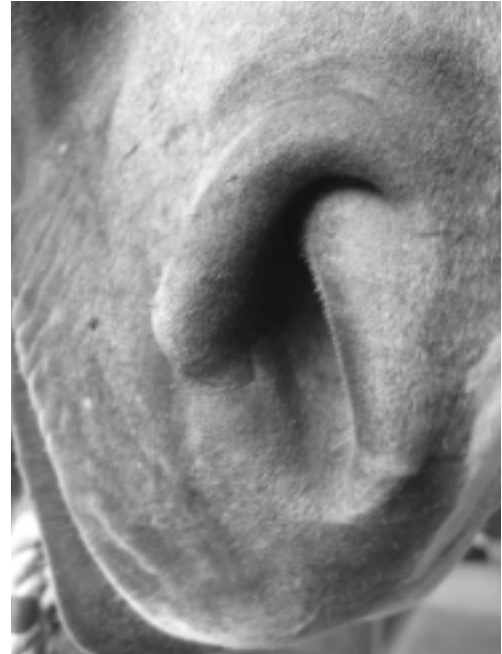


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Torn nostril injuries can be prevented by facing bucket snaps with the smooth side out.

as the horse's chest to prevent the horse from pawing into the bucket and getting injured.

Hanging

The most important thing about using hooks and snaps is to always put the fastener side toward the wall, with the smooth side toward the horse. The risk is about much more than the tail getting caught and pulled out. Horses regularly get their nostrils ripped open and off by getting them caught on the small release knob of the snap or edge of an open bucket hanger. And, there is no reason for it. Keep an eye out - you'll see lots of scarred nostrils. Remember: Snaps face the wall. ■



Ruthann Smith, world-class groom and braider, developed the progressive and cost-effective Lucky Braids™ coat care and braiding products prized by top horsemen. To attend Ruthann's

Top Turnout™ Clinics, receive her Evolved Grooming™ Newsletter, submit possible topics and access more information, please visit: <http://www.luckybraids.com>.