

Collar, Hame & Harness Fitting For The Working Horse



Measuring & Fitting Hames to the Collar



New Hames are made with a standard bend. Keep in mind that steel hames can be bent. Some horses need the hames bent to fit correctly. Using the right size hame is just as important as the collar. A draft style hame can be adjusted to fit 3 sizes. The standard rule is 1 size bigger hame than the collar. This photo shows a 26" hame. It can be adjusted to 24" in bottom notch. Using the 1 size bigger rule it would ideally fit a 23", 24", or 25" collar. If you can't get the collar narrow enough on top by tightening the top hame strap, you can move your top hame loop up a notch on your hame ratchet. This will give you more leverage to pull it together. Moving it down a notch will make your collar rounder.

By tightening the top and bottom hame straps you can usually draw the collar in snug against the side of the neck. If the hames can't be adjusted to fit properly they should be bent till they fit the shoulder. Remember, once you start using the collar it will push out and shape to the hame. It doesn't matter how perfect a collar fits, if the hames aren't bent right the collar will shape to the hame. (Very Important)

Driving hames

Use hames that are 1" or 2" bigger than the collar.

Sometimes the same size will work.

Measuring a Collar



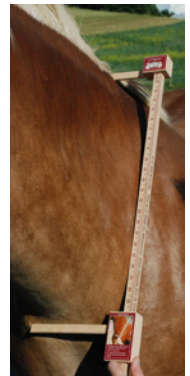
Collar with sraight bent hames Same collar with round bent hames

Bending & Tightening the Hames changes the shape of the collar. More bend in hames allows collar to widen out against hames. The width of the collar is determined by the bend in the hames. The collar can only widen out against the hames. Widening the collar out will make it shorter.

Narrowing will make it longer. (see photo above)

Measure a collar from top to bottom on front side (see photo above). Notice how the collar will shape to the hames. The hame will determine how the collar fits! The best way to fit a collar is to try one on, press in the sides and decide, do I need 1" bigger, 1" smaller, just right etc.

An EZ measure stick works great to measure your horse (see photos). Lay the measuring stick on the shoulder. This measurement should be your collar size. (add 1" if using pads) Measuring the width of the neck can be helpful in getting the proper length collar.



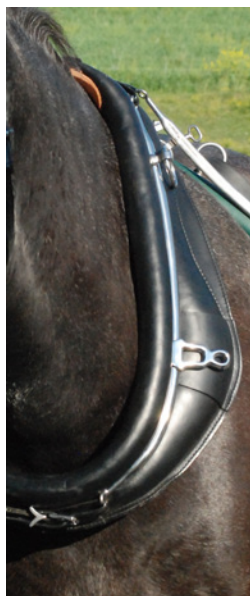
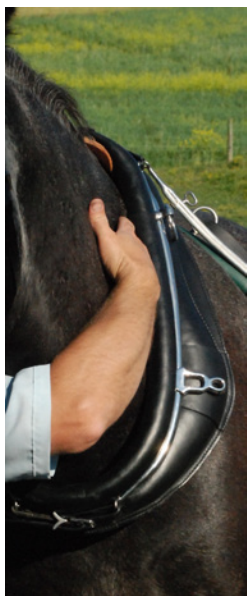
Collar Fitting



Collar should fit snug evenly along side of neck.



You should be able to slide your hand in at bottom of collar.



Space between collar and neck.

On a driving horse you should have approx. 2 fingers at the bottom of the collar. If the collar is pushed back on the shoulder you should be able to slide your hand in the bottom. Hames should be adjusted or bent so collar fits snug evenly all along side of neck. You should have to just slightly push to get your finger in on side of collar. After adjusting the hames, place hands on top & bottom of the collar and slide it forward to make sure you're not pinching the horse. Try to eliminate any extra room on side of neck but don't pinch the horse's neck. After using the horse a while the collar will set in and form to the horse's neck. You may have to adjust it tighter on the bottom. Draft horses can be fitted a little tighter on the bottom. They usually have heads lower when pulling so the collar is less likely to slide up and choke them. If you can slide your hand in flat at the bottom of the collar it should be right. On younger horses that are still growing if you decide to fit them looser to allow for growth, be sure to keep the sides snug. Leaving the extra length at bottom of collar or consider using a pad, then taking it out as the horse grows. Or use an adjustable collar.

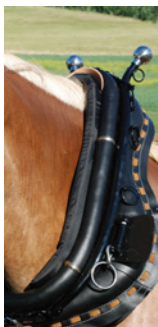
Add 1" to collar if you use a pad.

The advantages of using a collar.

Using a collar and hames that are well fitted allows your horse to work more freely in a heavy load. A well fitted collar & hames spreads the load nice and even on your horse's neck. A breast collar is lower on your horse's shoulder and compresses the shoulder when pulling a heavy load.

In most cases collars are better suited for heavy loads.

If a collar and hames are well fitted your horse will not get sores.



Vinyl pads do not absorb moisture and help heal sores on shoulder.

With a vinyl pad you might see more sweat come out from under pad. We feel that is because a vinyl pad will not absorb the sweat.

Replace pads as needed.

Vinyl pads work well to give your horse extra padding. It is a good way to use up extra length on a growing horse. It also works good for working horses that gained weight over winter. Then as spring comes with field work their necks sweat and shrink down a little. Putting in a pad will fill in the gap in the collar size. Its good to keep an eye on the collar and adjust the hame straps as needed when your horse gains or loses weight.

Adjust hames to apply equal pressure all along side of neck to keep collar from flopping side to side.(Flopping causes sores)When fitting new collars, bottom hame strap can be loosened 1 or 2 holes on bottom hame strap until collar is formed to horse and hame, then tightened if needed.



Collar Maintenance

Collars will last longer if oiled annually to keep leather soft & in good shape. If you don't oil them they will get dry and hard making them less comfortable. Take a wire brush or rag and remove the dirt and take a paint brush and brush harness oil on them. Keep them warm a few days for oil to absorb into leather.

Measurements needed to fit harness.



Mouth to mouth over head



Around Girth
3" to 4" behind front legs



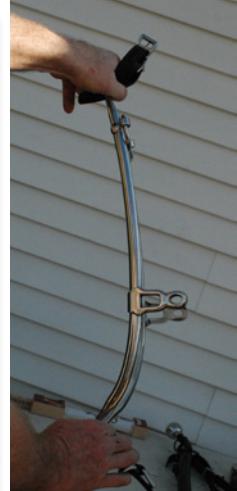
These 2 measurements are needed to fit harness along with collar size & breeching length. Breeching is measured where hair part at flank to other side at flank

Harness Fitting Tips

- Keep eyes at center of blind cup
- Breeching hanging too low restricts leg movement, A horse has less power down lower.
- On breast style driving harness keep breast right below wind pipe. Going higher will hurt his air flow, going lower restricts his shoulder and leg movement.
- If you use a split breast, keep the pads together in front.

Hame Bender

Manufactured & Sold by Chupp Blacksmith • Fredericksburg OH



This hame bender will bend any steel or stainless hames.
For example Mules have a straight neck therefore hames need
to be straight from where trace attaches to ratchet.

Information has been compiled by:

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