

How to Fit a Halter for Showmanship



Showmanship classes are judged in part on how well your horse is groomed and presented. Part of the overall presentation is the fit of your halter. When your halter fits correctly, it will be comfortably snug on your horse's face and will complement the shape of his head. A clean, properly adjusted halter will enhance your horse's overall appearance. For example, if your horse has a very refined, shapely head, use a halter with thinner leather. If your horse has a coarse head, wider leather will look better on him.



The noseband of your halter should rest just about an inch below your horse's cheekbone. You should only be able to fit one or two fingers between the point of the cheekbone and the top of the noseband. Using a chain isn't mandatory, but many exhibitors opt to use one. If you do use one, make sure you attach it with the snap facing away from your horse's face so that the button doesn't dig into him.



For halter and showmanship classes, your halter will fit more snugly than an everyday stable halter. You don't want it so tight that it digs into your horse, but there shouldn't be obvious gaps between the halter and your horse's head. If you find that you have to adjust any of the buckles to the highest or lowest hole, consider investing in a new halter where your horse fits in the middle adjustments.



If you use a chain with your showmanship halter, there should be four to six inches of chain between the leather part of the lead and the halter so that you can hold the lead in the correct place for optimum control without touching the chain. You can have links of chain removed at a hardware store, but in a pinch, you can shorten the excess chain by running the chain through the halter ring and attaching it back on itself. Make sure that the snap is facing outward so the button doesn't rub on your horse's cheek.