

# Methods of Physical Restraint

## For Castration:

### 1) Standing:

- The horse is restrained in a stock/stanchion
- Ensure the owner handles the colt prior to surgery so the animal becomes accustomed to handling
- Should be done in a clean, confined area (Eg. Stable) with adequate lighting
- Use of a twitch can be applied while giving local anesthetics
- **Advantages:**
  - ★ Avoids the risk associated with the use of general anesthesia
  - ★ Cheaper method
  - ★ Performed faster
- **Disadvantages:**
  - ★ Possibly a more rushed surgery
  - ★ Limited to use with open castration technique
  - ★ Limited access
  - ★ Not as sterile a procedure as general anesthetic

### 2) General anesthesia:

- Uses anesthetic drugs
- Should be performed in a small paddock
- The area should be clean and have adequate space
- The horse is placed in lateral recumbency with the upper hindlimb being drawn in a cranial direction towards to shoulder using a rope
- **Advantages:**
  - ★ Provides surgical access
  - ★ Strict asepsis techniques
  - ★ Can be used on closed castration as well as semi-closed castration
  - ★ Decreased chances of herniation
  - ★ Allows for umbilical hernia repair
- **Disadvantages:**
  - ★ Risks associated with the use of anesthetic drugs and recovery
  - ★ If used with open castration technique, there is an increased risk of herniation



Positioning of the horse

## General Restraint:

### 1) Halter and lead rope:

- Halter the horse and attach the rope to the halter.
- Tie the rope securely using a quick release slip knot or have an assistant hold the rope if the horse is not accustomed to being tied. ➤ Never wrap the rope around your hand or arm



### 2) Chain shank:

- Can be placed through the mouth and attached to the opposite cheek ring
- Can also be placed over the bridge of the nose and exerted pressure results in the nose being pulled down



Placed through the mouth



Placed over the nose bridge

3) **Twitch:**

- Wrapped around the top lip of the horse and mild pressure applied.
- Severe pain from twisting the chain too tightly results in the horse pulling away or attempting to strike.
- Always hold the handle securely so that it would not be pulled away by the horse



4) Hand twitch:

- Grabbing a fold of skin from the shoulder area or applying pressure to one or both ears.



Hand twitch

5) Limb lifting:

- Lifting the forelimb via a rear or front approach.
- Always keep an eye on the back legs incase the horse decides to kick



lifting the forelimb and hindlimb

**6) Stocks:**

- Aids in containment of the horse
- Horses can attempt to jump out



(Information adapted from Years 1 to 3 DVM Skills Classes, UWI SVM)



## **References**

- 1) Themes UFO. 16. Surgery of the Stallion Reproductive Tract [Internet]. Veterian Key. 2016 [cited 2020Oct17]. Available from: <https://veteriankey.com/16-surgery-of-the-stallion-reproductive-tract/>
- 2) 7 commonly asked questions on how to use a twitch [Internet]. DVM 360. [cited 2020Oct4]. Available from <https://www.dvm360.com/view/7-commonly-asked-questions-how-use-twitch>