

Parts of a Lariat Rope

Our topics for this week are:

- **Construction and uses of lariats**
- **Parts of a lariat loop**
- **Lariat hondas**

Ropes are long fibers that more than 5/12 inches in diameter. Smaller long fiber diameters are referred to as cord twine, string, or thread. Ropes are made of natural fiber or synthetic fibers. A rope that is used to handle or restraint livestock and horses is called a lariat. A lariat may have a running noose for catching animals or no noose for tying (tethering, picketing) animals. A lariat with a loop is also called a lasso.

Most modern lariats are made of synthetic fibers and formed into twisted strands. Twisted rope, with its lumpy surface, holds knots and hitches better than single cord or braided rope. A splice is interweaving sections of untwisted rope. Twisted rope can be untwisted in sections to form a loop on an end of a rope with an eye splice or to join two ropes together by a short splice of the end of each rope.

One of the disadvantages of twisted rope is that there is no protective outside layer. Every fiber twists to the outside multiple times being exposed to abrasion, moisture, and sunlight.

Lariats

Lariats have a working end, standing part, and standing end. A 180 degree bend in a rope is called a bight. A circular bend is a loop.

A sliding loop (noose) can be made with a knot, called a honda, that forms a small fixed loop or channel for the rope's standing end to slide through. Hondas made with the rope may have a small leather wrap called a "burner" around the honda loop to reduce friction as the slip loop slides through. Hondas may also be metal (aluminum or stainless steel) or plastic. Metal hondas allow the rope to slip back and forth more easily to provide immediate pressure release when an animal stops resisting restraint. Metal hondas are also more reliable in wet conditions. Tied hondas may have a metal lining inside the tied loop to permit better sliding similar to a complete metal honda. Hondas may have a swivel base or designed to allow breakaway for roping practice. If to be used around the neck of a horse, a double-overhand knot can be tied in the rope (2 ft from the honda for 2-year-olds and 18 inches for weanlings and yearlings) to prevent the loop from completely closing and squeezing the neck of young horses.

A quick release honda is a metal honda that can be opened to release a caught animal without the need to loosen the slip loop. Quick release hondas are commonly used by large animal practice veterinarians. These hondas have a finger latch to quickly open the metal honda. They can be useful in restraining cattle, but quick release hondas can be dangerous to handler's fingers if the handler uses his finger to unclasp the latch when freeing the animal. The finger latch has a hole in it so that a rawhide leather string can be attached in advance of the lariat's use. After the animal is caught, the leather tether is grabbed to open the latch rather than putting a finger in the honda and endangering that finger if the animal moves while the finger is entrapped.

Parts of a Lariat Loop

Lariat loops (nooses) consist primarily of a base, tip, honda, and spoke. The base is the top part of a loop and the bottom portion is the tip. The spoke is the portion of the rope that has passed through the honda and extends to the portion that is held with the base by the throwing hand. The bottom strand of the loop is the section of rope from the honda side of the base to the tip. The top strand is the section of loop from the tip to where the rope goes through the honda.

Hondas on lariats should be rope, rawhide, or light weight metal. Heavy metal hondas on ropes to be thrown can injury the animal's eyes, ears, or facial bones. Metal hondas are useful in training horses and other animals to give under pressure. When the animal quits pulling on the rope, there is an immediate release of the pressure.

If you have comments or you're interested in particular animal handling subjects, contact us at CBC@BetterAnimalHandling.com

Now let's recap the key points to remember from today's episode:

- 1. Rope hondas are traditional for lariats used for capture of cattle.**
- 2. Metal hondas allow more control of the size of a loop when training horses.**
- 3. A leather tether should always be used to open a metal quick release honda.**

More information on animal handling can be found in my books, *Animal Handling and Physical Restraint*, *Concise Textbook of Small Animal Handling*, and *Concise Textbook of Large Animal Handling* all published by CRC Press and available on Amazon and from many other fine book supply sources.

Additional information is provided at: www.betteranimalhandling.com . This website has more than 300 past podcasts with notes on handling of dogs, cats, other small mammals, birds, reptiles, horses, cattle, small ruminants, swine, and poultry.

Don't forget, serious injury or death can result from handling and restraining some animals. Safe and effective handling and restraint requires experience and continual practice. Acquisition of the needed skills should be under the supervision of an experienced animal handler.