

What NOT to Wear When Handling Animals

Our topics for this week:

- **Improper attire when handling animals**
- **Proper small animal handling attire**
- **Proper large animal handling attire**

What NOT to Wear When Handling Any Animals

We will provide direction on what to wear when handling animals but first, what should you NOT wear when handling small or large animals.

- Contaminated or torn clothing
- Clothing with shiny accessories that could distract animals or damage tack
- Tight clothing that restricts a full range of movement of the limbs
- Puffy sleeves that could catch on handling equipment or animal containments
- Hooded tops or loose long hair that could block peripheral vision
- Sandals, tennis shoes, or other footwear permeable to liquids
- Large rings, dangling jewelry, or shiny and/or reflective.
- Long fingernails which can entrap disease agents or injure animals
- Fuzzy outerwear such as wool collared coats that can trap animal hair, dust, or body secretions

What to Wear When Handling Large Animals

The question then becomes what SHOULD be worn to handle small animals?

- Jewelry, if any, should be limited to wedding band-type rings and small, stud-style earrings.
- Clothing should be reasonably clean and not torn. A clinical or laboratory coat is appropriate for handling dogs, cats, and other small animals. Long sleeved coats can aid in protecting handlers from cat scratches. Footwear should be closed toe and impermeable to liquids.
- Attire for animal handling should be worn ONLY when handling or restraining animals and then changed to reduce the risk of transmitting disease among other animals and to humans.
- Fingernails should not extend beyond the end of the finger to reduce the risk of injury to other handlers or to animals being handled and because longer fingernails are more capable of entrapping disease agents.
- If ID badges are needed, they should either be attached to the clothing or worn using a safety breakaway, lanyard around the neck.

- Handler cuts or abrasions should be treated and covered before handling animals.
- Special Personal Protective Equipment should be worn at appropriate times, such as:
 - Waterproof aprons should be worn when bathing animals
 - Safety glasses or goggles should be worn if handling animals whose nails or beaks are being trimmed, especially when using a high speed, handheld, electric grinder
 - Ear plugs should be worn if noise from barking dogs prevents conversation in a normal voice
 - Face masks or shields must be worn when handling birds with pointed beaks or assisting with teeth cleaning or other dental procedures
 - Latex rubber or nitrile gloves should be worn if hands have cuts or cracks and should always be worn when handling small mammals other than dogs and cats to protect from infectious diseases and allergens.

What then should be worn when handling large animals ?

- Jewelry, if any, should be limited to wedding band-type rings and small, stud-style earrings
- Clothing should be reasonably clean and untornd. Short sleeves or rolled up long sleeves are needed to keep arms from being easily caught on fences, gates, and handling equipment in warm weather. Coveralls or thick trousers in muted green or khaki color are appropriate for routine handling of livestock or poultry
- A strong belt can be used as a temporary lead rope around the animal's neck or a flag to direct animal movement.
- Leather leggings are advisable if handling ratices to protect legs from forward strikes.
- Boots should be loose fitting, water impermeable, with non-skid soles. Metal toe caps may be advisable when working with cattle, small ruminants, or ratices.
- Attire for animal handling should be worn only when handling or restraining animals and then changed to reduce the risk of transmitting disease among other animals and to humans.
- Fingernails should not extend beyond the end of the finger to reduce the risk of injury to other handlers or to animals being handled and because longer fingernails are more capable of entrapping disease agents.
- If ID badges are needed, they should either be attached to the clothing or worn using a safety, breakaway lanyard around the neck.
- Handler cuts or abrasions should be treated and covered before handling animals.
- Special Personal Protective Equipment:
 - Waterproof aprons should be worn when bathing animals.

- Safety glasses or goggles should be worn if handling animals that may sling body secretions or bath water or when dust is prevalent. Goggles should be used if working with horses or cattle in wet/muddy conditions.
- Ear plugs should be worn if noise from animals, particularly swine, or their handling equipment prevents conversation in a normal voice.
- Nose and mouth masks (N95 or N100) are needed in circumstances that could involve infectious diseases or dusty environments, particularly in total confinement poultry environments.
- Latex rubber or nitrile gloves should be worn if hands have cuts or cracks.
- Hats for handlers of livestock or poultry aid to protect from overexposure to sunlight and head injury. Ball caps are popular, but a simple brimmed hat will also help protect against sun on the ears and back of the neck. When working in tight quarters, brimmed hats give the handler an early warning of the possibility of hitting his head on structure beams or handling equipment. They also help keep spider webs in barns out of the face and hair. Hoods, other headgear, or long hair styles that obstruct peripheral vision or might become snagged and entrap the head should not be worn when working with livestock, particularly cattle, horses, or swine.

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. Proper attire is essential for animal handler safety.**
- 2. Proper attire for handling small animals and large animals has both similarities and differences.**
- 3. Attire for animal handling is needed to protect against physical and infectious disease injuries.**

More information on animal handling can be found in my book, *Animal Handling and Physical Restraint*, published by CRC Press and available on Amazon and from many other fine book supply sources. My new spiral-bound handbook, *Concise Textbook of Small Animal Handling* was recently published and available from all major science book supply sources.

Additional information is provided at: www.betteranimalhandling.com . This website has more than 150 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.