

How to Hold the Reins

When introducing your horse to the double bridle, especially if he has a sensitive mouth, it is sometimes beneficial to put his normal snaffle bit in the double instead of a bridoon. Do not actively use the reins of the curb until both you and your horse have become more accustomed to this new bit. Later,

you may choose to substitute the snaffle with a bridoon. Traditionally, the bridoon rein is a little wider than the curb rein. This makes it easier to distinguish between the two when adjusting them. It is also a good idea to use bridoon reins with leather studs, which help prevent the reins from slipping through your fingers. It is customary to have the loose

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- Method 1: most commonly used**
- Bridoon reins held like a snaffle rein between the pinkie and ring fingers
 - Curb reins go between ring and middle fingers
 - Both reins leave fist between index finger and thumb, bridoon on top
 - Reins cross

- Method 2: also commonly used**
- Bridoon reins under pinkie fingers
 - Curb reins between pinkie and ring fingers
 - Both reins leaving fists between index fingers and thumbs with the bridoon reins on top of curb reins
 - Reins cross

- Method 3: a variation**
- Curb reins under pinkie fingers
 - Bridoon reins between pinkie and ring fingers
 - Both reins leaving fists between index fingers and thumbs with curb reins on top of bridoon reins
 - Reins do not cross

- Method 4: another variation**
- Bridoon reins under pinkie fingers
 - Curb reins between pinkie and ring fingers
 - Bridoon reins leave fists between index fingers and thumbs
 - Curb reins leave fists between index and middle fingers
 - Reins cross

ends of the reins hanging on the right side of the horse's neck. There are several different methods of holding the reins. Each one has a particular effect on the horse: how he accepts the bit, how it feels in his mouth (e.g., varying degrees of lightness), how he accepts half halts and his overall way of going. It is impossible to predict which

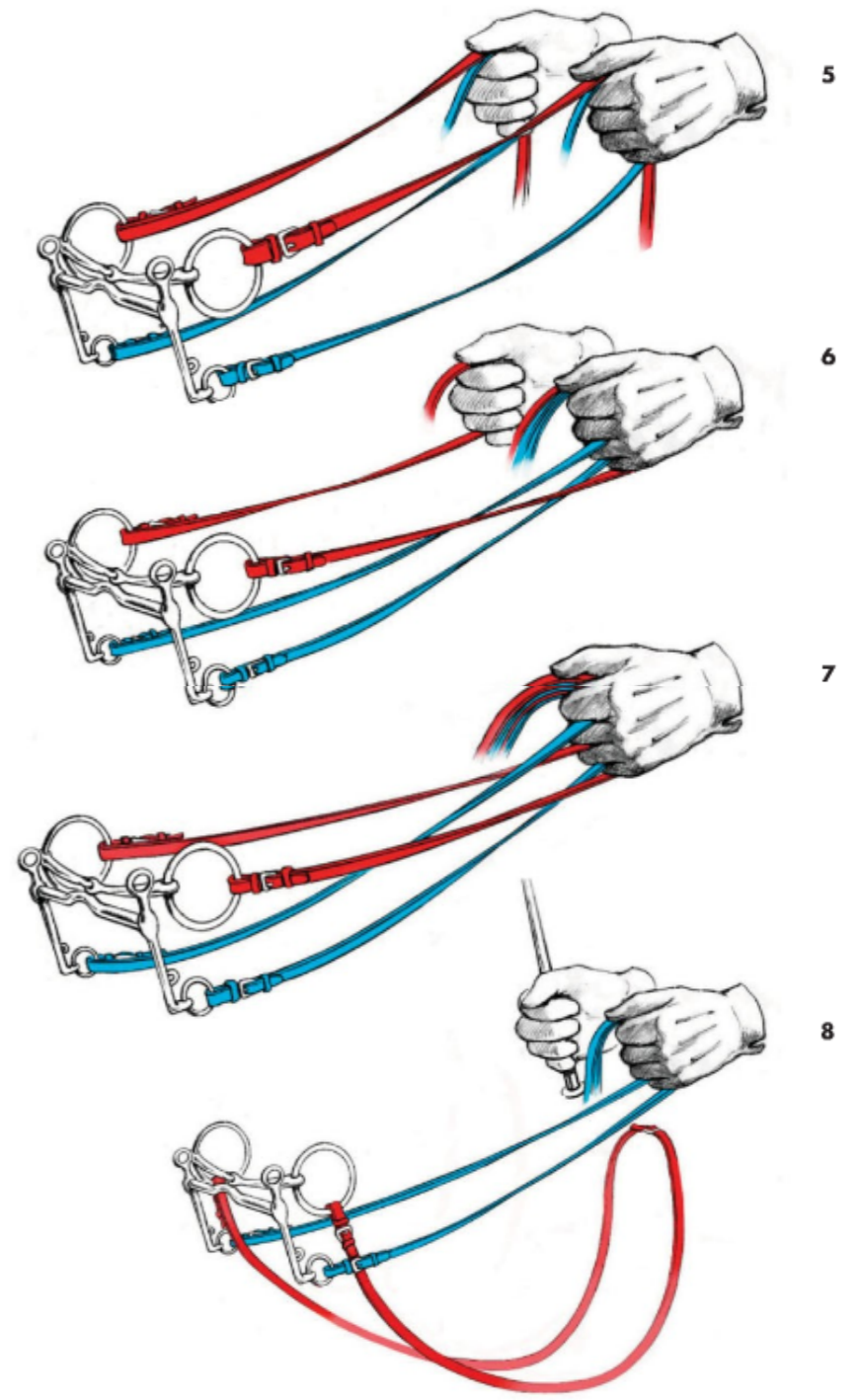
More Advanced Methods

- Method 5: the Fillis method**
- Curb reins go under pinkie fingers, leaving fists between index fingers and thumbs
 - Bridoon reins entering fists between index finger and thumb on top of curb rein, leaving fists by pinkie

- Method 6: three-to-one**
- Left bridoon rein under pinkie fingers
 - Left curb rein between pinkie and ring finger of left hand
 - Right curb rein between left ring and middle fingers, with all three on top of one another and leaving fist between index finger and thumb
 - Right bridoon rein in right hand between pinkie and ring fingers

- Method 7: four reins in left hand**
- Left bridoon rein under pinkie
 - Left curb rein between pinkie and ring fingers
 - Right bridoon rein between ring and middle fingers
 - Right curb rein under index finger
 - All reins are stacked, leaving fist between index finger and thumb

- Method 8: auf blanke Kandare**
- Bridoon reins are on horse's neck by withers, knotted into safety strap of saddle or tied to mane
 - Left curb rein under pinkie, right curb rein between ring and middle fingers; both leave fist between index finger and thumb
 - Whip is held upright in right hand



method your horse is going to prefer. To a large degree this also depends on your riding abilities. It is not advisable to experiment with different methods of holding the reins until you become an accomplished rider with educated hands. How you hold and use your reins can make a big difference in your horse's responses to the aids and in his way of

going. As you become more educated in the use of the double bridle, you may want to make changes to suit your abilities and your horse's needs.

Both methods 1 and 2 (p. 52) are frequently used. Their effect on the horse is the same. Because they are also relatively simple, they allow riders to get comfortable holding four reins and to learn how

to use the rein aids correctly. During schooling or test riding, when preparing movements or giving half halts, the curb reins can easily become too tight. As a result, the horse becomes overbent or leans on the bit or both. This usually happens surreptitiously, and most riders are unaware that the dominance of the curb rein is the cause of the problem.

