

Halter in Detail

*Maintaining your bands overnight;
last in a six-part series.*

**By AQHA Professional Horseman
Margo Ball with Christine Hamilton
Photos by Christine Hamilton**

I LIKE TO BAND MY HORSES THE NIGHT BEFORE I SHOW SO I AM not under the gun the morning of the show. When I get ready to show, I take the slinky off and check for any bands that might have popped in the night. I have a pair of scissors in my grooming bag so I can touch up any scraggly hairs just before I go in.

But it's just wasted work if your horse rubs out the bands overnight. Here's some of what I do to prevent that. 📷

Christine Hamilton is editor of the American Quarter Horse Journal. To comment, write to chamilton@aqha.org.

BIO

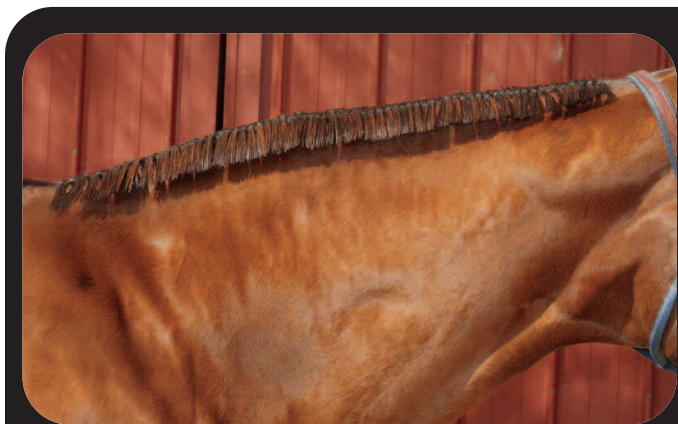
AQHA Professional Horseman Margo Ball has been training and showing Quarter Horses for almost 40 years, with several halter world champions and performance Superiors to her credit. She has produced training DVD's on showmanship and grooming. An AQHA judge for more than 25 years, Margo holds cards with five additional organizations. She and her brothers Tom and Wayne own and operate Ball's Quarter Horses and Stallion Station in their native Fort Collins, Colorado.



It's really important to have a good slinky that fits properly. The most common mistake I see people make is using a slinky too large for the horse. The slinky helps hold these bands in place nice and tight. If it's not snug, when you take it off, it's a mess under there, and you're in trouble. A good slinky also helps train the mane to lie down. When a horse comes off the winter, you'll see guard hairs along the mane. A slinky combined with good grooming and conditioning will help those lie down.



Listerine can help with itching, too. Before I band, I comb it through the mane and make sure it is well down into the roots and scalp, before I apply any grooming product. It does help some horses. Remember, itching can be caused by a deeper skin problem such as an allergy or parasite. If your horse has persistent itching or hair loss that only seems to be getting worse, you need to have your AAEP-member veterinarian look at it.



This is the mare's mane we banded in our series, pictured after spending the night in a slinky. I just pulled the slinky off, and it looks great. I'll pull some of the bands tighter and snip any straggly hairs.



The No. 1 reason why a horse rubs out its bands is because her mane itches. You have to remember to start with a clean mane. But a lot of itching is caused by soap residue – you have to make sure you rinse and rinse again when you bathe your horse. And find a product that won't irritate her skin. I use shampoos and conditioners made for horses, but a gentle human product is OK, too, as long as you use products made to go together.