

# HOW TO STOP A RUNAWAY HORSE

## 1 Hold on tight to the saddle with your hands and thighs.

Most injuries occur when the rider is thrown, falls, or jumps off the horse and hits the ground or some immovable object, such as a tree or fence post.

## 2 Grip the saddle horn or the front of the saddle with one hand and the reins with the other.

If you have lost hold of the reins, hold on to the saddle horn or the horse's mane and wait for the horse to slow or stop.

## 3 Sit up in the saddle as much as you can.

Fight the instinct to lean forward (it will be especially strong if you are in a wooded area with many trees and branches), since this is not the standard position for a rider when the horse is asked to stop (*whoa!*), and the horse can feel the difference. Keep a deep seat, with your feet pushed a little forward in the stirrups.

## 4 Alternately tug and release the reins with a medium pressure.

Never jerk or pull too hard on the reins of a horse running at full speed—you could pull the horse off-balance, and it may stumble or fall. There is a very high risk of serious injury or death if the horse falls while running at full speed (25 to 30 mph).

## 5 When the horse slows down to a slow lope or a trot, pull one rein to the side with steady pressure so that the horse's head moves to the side, toward your foot in the stirrup.

This maneuver will cause the horse to walk in a circle. The horse will become bored, sense that you are in control again, and slow to a near stop.

## 6 When the horse is at a walk, pull back with slow, steady pressure on both reins until the horse stops.

## 7 Dismount the horse immediately, before it has a chance to bolt again.

Hold the reins as you get down to keep the horse from moving.

### Be Aware

- Long reins dangling in front of a horse may cause it to trip. Inexperienced riders should tie the ends of the reins together so that they cannot fall past the horse's neck and pose added danger.
- Horses bolt when they are frightened or extremely irritated. The key response is to remain in control of the situation without causing the horse greater anxiety. Talk to it reassuringly and rub its neck with one hand. Yelling, screaming, and kicking the horse will only make it more agitated.