



Where Do I Attach My Footman Loops?

You found out that your cart needs some form of braking ability so that your vehicle doesn't run up on your horse. So, you purchased a pair of footman loops. But where do they go on the shafts? We are here to help!

The footman loop is a small piece of metal that attaches to the bottom side of each of your carriage shafts. It is how you keep the harness holdback straps from sliding on the shafts so that your breeching is effective at holding back and stopping the vehicle. The correct placement of those loops can help the horse be more efficient at his job using said breeching.



You want the pull from the breeching to the footman loop to be fairly level, thus pulling straight from the breeching. In order to accomplish this, the footman loops need to be mounted forward on the shafts from the breeching. In the photo below, the horse is in a down transition with the breeching snugly engaged with a straight pull. You can see that the shaft is being pushed forward, with the tug stop up against the French shaft tug. This is the correct placement of the footman loop on the shaft.



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If the footman loops are placed too far forward, harness holdback straps may interfere with the shaft tugs or shorter holdbacks may not reach the footman loops.

If the footman loops are not far enough forward, the pull can be angled down from the breeching ring instead of straight, and can put unnecessary downward pressure on the hip strap (right). While this isn't ideal, it's not necessarily a dealbreaker, either. It just isn't perfect. With a horse that is in consistent training in this set up, the downward pull on the hip strap may eventually contribute to soreness in the hips, so it is best to be corrected if possible. With a lightly used recreational horse, this set up may not affect the horse as much.



If the footman loops are too far back on the shafts, they become useless [below]. This placement of the footman loops is most often found on cheap imported metal carts. If the holdback straps are used with the footman loops in this position, the breeching will not be able to be engaged, and the vehicle could run up on the horse. In the photo below, the hip strap is adjusted too far back, leaving the breeching too loose and sagging. With the footman loop right below the breeching ring, this vehicle has too much play forward and back. The stopping of the vehicle is reliant on the friction of the



ground on the wheels, and the small ring behind the shaft tugs (loops) which act as ill-placed tug stops. The forward rings on the shafts could be used for the holdback straps, but the straps would have to be considerably longer. If the breeching straps create an upward angle on the forward

loop, they risk pulling the breeching up, potentially causing the horse to buck. In this case, the footman loops need to be moved or another one added on each shaft. The correct location for the footman loops would be just forward of halfway between both existing rings.



So, how do you attach the footman loops? With our wooden shaft vehicles, we first drill small pilot holes where we want the footman loops. Then, we use stainless steel screws to attach the loops. It helps to mount the footman loops on the shaft trim so that the holdbacks are wrapped on the shaft trim as well. This helps protect the painted or varnished finish on your shafts from wear.



If your shafts are metal, it becomes a little more complicated. The footman loops are generally welded on metal shafts. Depending on the composition of the metal, footman loops may be screwed on the shafts, but otherwise you will have to find a good welder to attach new loops.

It is also possible to add additional footman loops. It may not look absolutely correct in higher-level competition to have two sets on the shafts, but it is more acceptable than having the footman loops and holdbacks in the wrong location on the shafts. Footman loops can also be used to secure a kick strap in the correct location on the shafts. They also work well for attaching other items to the carriage, such as a spares kit.



While there is no mathematical measurement for the correct position of the footman loops, placement is important for the optimal functioning of the harness' braking system. With the footman loops in the wrong position, it can be less effective, uncomfortable for the horse, or even downright dangerous for both horse and driver. It is beneficial to have the footman loops correctly placed on the shafts.

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