

Selecting the Right Horse Fencing

There are many factors that must be considered when you are researching the various types of fencing that is the right choice for your horses and their needs. The highest priority, regardless of the type of fencing you choose, must be safety. Once you have chosen the safest fencing for your horses' needs, then you may consider appearance, budget limits, installation, and maintenance requirements. There are several types of fencing to choose from; all of which have varying degrees of cost, maintenance, and suitability in certain locations. The three major groups of fencing that will be discussed in this article are permanent fencing, portable or temporary fencing, and dangerous or unsuitable fencing.

Disclaimer: I the, author, work at centaurfencing.net, but have tried to be unbiased and represent all similar brands equally. As the only type of fencing we carry is permanent, that is the only place you'll see our products represented.

Before moving on, please consider which type of fencing you might need. This chart should help you make that decision and can be found in its entirety at Zareba's website.

Basic Fence Types*			
	Portable Temporary	Semi-Permanent Permanent	Permanent High Tensile
Expected fence life	Short term, frequent moves	20 plus years	20-40 years
Ease of installation	Simple, fast	Easy to moderate	Moderate, special tools required
Animals controlled	Cows, horses, pets, lawn and garden nuisance animals	Cows, horses, hogs, sheep, goats, exotics, deer, predators	Cows, hogs, sheep, goats, exotics, deer, predators
Best suited for	Temporary fencing, managed intensive grazing	Pastures, cross fences	Permanent perimeter installations
Post type	Step-in posts, steel & rod posts, fiberglass posts	T-posts, wood posts, U-posts	Wood posts, T-posts, U-posts
Wire type	Poly wire, poly tape, poly rope, Aluminum wire	Poly wire, poly tape, poly rope, steel and Aluminum wire	12 ½ gauge high tensile wire
Distance	Short	Unlimited	Unlimited
Features	Lightweight, reusable, easy to move	Workable with any configuration of posts and conductive wire	Longest life fence system available, minimal maintenance

*NOTE: Portable, temporary and semi-permanent fencing should not be the sole means of animal containment. Use portable and temporary electric fencing within permanent fencing to lower the risk of injury to animals and people should an animal escape.

Permanent Fencing Options

Polymer Rail Fencing. Standard rail fencing consists of galvanized steel wires embedded in high tensile polymer. This gives the rails flexibility while remaining strong with higher break strength than other types of fencing. The advantages of using standard rail fencing are listed in the following: the fencing will not rot or rust like wood rails or pipe fencing, the high tensile polymer does not lose its tension or shape even with changes in temperature, and the ability to continually strand the rails together increases the flexibility and absorption of impact if a horse were to run into the rails. The higher rate of impact absorption means that there is decreased risk for injuries and broken rails.



Electric Rail Fencing. The second common option for permanent horse fencing is electric rail fencing. Electric rail fencing is primarily used for keeping equines in and predators out. It is very similar to the standard rail fence with the galvanized steel wires embedded in a polymer coating. The only difference is that these rails are electrically charged with an AC, DC, or solar powered charger. Electric rails also have a high impact absorbency but if the electric rails are installed properly, there should be fewer instances of impact once the horse understands that it will be shocked (not electrocuted) if the horse comes into contact with the rail.

The top selling polymer rail type products are:

1. Centaur Fencing - Cenflex, Centaur, and HotRail (the electric option)
2. HorseRail – Horserail & Hot-top (electric option)
3. Ramm Fence – Flex-Fence (no electric option)

Wire or line fencing. Self explanatory by its name, the wire or line can be either bare or coated with a visible polymer as it also belongs to the high tensile wire category (I highly recommend

the polymer coated products). The wire or line fencing generally consists of 1 to 4 galvanized steel wires that are either charged by electricity through the wires or through the polymer coating. The benefits of polymer coated wire are included in the following: lower risk of injury to the horse, increased visibility, and minimum maintenance. Wire or line fencing is best used for shorter distances.

The top selling polymer line products are:

1. Centaur Fencing – PolyPlus & White Lightning (the electric option)
2. Pro-Tek – Polywire (electric option)
3. Gallagher – Equifence (electric option)

Other permanent fencing options include vinyl and wood rail fencing. Both are viable options, but neither are built specifically for horses. BUT, both wood rail and vinyl are far better than alternatives like steel wire or barbed wire which can be very dangerous to your horses.

Barbed wire is cheap and relatively easy to install but, there is an incredibly high risk of injury to horses. If a horse runs into the barbed wire, they can suffer serious injuries from lacerations and abrasions. Some injuries that can happen with barbed wire can be fatal. If safety is truly your highest concern with fencing, it is recommended that you do not use barbed wire at all.

Wood rail fencing is incredibly appealing with its appearance but it has numerous disadvantages! Wood rails are expensive and difficult for companies to ship all year around. They are also very expensive to maintain due to rot, nails needing replaced and hammered back into place (nails are a safety hazard as well), paint or stain touch ups, and the boards will break or snap if a horse runs into them.

PVC or vinyl fencing is an inexpensive alternative to wood rails and it requires little maintenance in comparison but, the installation is tedious and expensive. If not done properly, the vinyl rails can dislocate from the upright posts if a horse runs into them and in high wind areas, the rails can also be shifted or moved over time.

Temporary & Portable Fencing Options

The second type of fencing is portable or temporary fencing. This type of fencing option includes wire or line, tape, and braid fencing. These types of fencing are generally available in electric but often have non-electric options (Or you just don't hook a charger up).

Tape fencing is generally used as temporary fencing and portable electric fencing for horses. Tape fencing can be used for larger distances than wire or line fencing. The



polymer tape has a mixture of conductive metals interwoven into the “tape” to carry a charge through each tape width. Tape fencing is simple to install and requires very little maintenance when properly installed.

The top selling tape products are:

1. Gallagher – PolyTape, TurboTape
2. Zareba – PolyTape
3. Parmak – Baygard PolyTape

Braid Fencing. Braids consist of braided polyester external structures with polypropylene cores or polymer rope that has conductive metal wires, typically copper, interwoven within the braid to allow for the electricity to pass through the braid. Braid fences are more visible than most line fencing and easy to install. Products like [*ElectroBraid*](#) (my top recommendation for a braid product) are more resistant to ultraviolet rays and will not unravel or fray. Braid fences are ideal for keeping horses in and keeping predators out of the enclosed area and away from horses.

The top selling polymer line products are:

1. Electrobraided – Electrobraided
2. Gallaher – Equibraided