

WHY THE CHAINS

Elephants that live with people need to be confined in some way. Elephant proof enclosures cost millions of dollars. Chains are a cheap and practical alternative that keeps the elephant and people safe. What most people don't realise is that elephants are incredibly strong and could break their tether if they really wanted to. When an elephant is being cared for, ie fed, watered, bathed, exercised and being taken care of, they have no problem spending some of its time tethered. Elephants in the wild, don't walk around looking at the scenery, they look for food and water.

If elephants were not tethered they would be walking anywhere they want. They can destroy other people's trees, farm land, or orchards not understanding those are not for them to eat. If they become a pest they can get killed or poisoned or injured or at the very least be resented. Human Elephant Conflict is the biggest threat facing elephants in the wild in Thailand. We can keep our domestic elephants safe. Mother elephants are also tethered while in the fenced areas because they can climb over the fence and this causes distress for the baby. Which in turn causes distress of all the mothers and babies in the nursery. Tethering is necessary to keep the elephants safe from harming each other (not all elephants like each other) and other people, The advantages of chains over other means of tethering are overwhelming. Chains do not stretch or shrink with changes in heat or moisture. Chains are stronger than the alternatives. Chains, unlike rope or wire, are very unlikely to cause wounds and to get twisted up in knots or caught up in trees or rocks. Chains are very durable and last longer than the alternatives. They are easy to keep clean especially during the rainy season when it is muddy. They don't stay wet so the elephant skin is unaffected by rubbing of wet material. They can easily be adjusted to size to fit properly. Chains mean elephants can be easily moved around and can go anywhere, with their mahout. They go to the river, or go outside the village to grassy areas and eat in different spots. They go to work. Elephants can also have a visual presence in everyday life with their participation in festivals, parades and public events. We have been flooded several times over the last 16 years because we are located on the Lopburi River. Tethering meant we could relocate as many times as necessary quickly and easily. If the elephants were not used to being tethered and being moved around they would have suffered distress and the mahouts job would have been far more dangerous.

Veterinarians support the use of tools, such as the ankus and tethering, as they play an essential role in health examinations, hands-on care, and veterinary treatment. These are the tools that will guide the elephant to follow instructions, allowing the veterinarian to perform with greater efficiency. The tools serve as safety measures for both the elephants and the humans who are doing their jobs.