Saddle Fitting Advice

- In order to save time and money on shipping & exchange it is essential that you have a good idea of what size saddle you and your horse require:
- WIDTH (narrow TO extra wide)
- LENGTH 15 ½ - 19 inch [stud – cantle]
- D – D ring varies
- If your previous saddle fits well you can use those measurements or you can always get a template from your local Master Saddler.

HOW TO TEST THAT YOUR SADDLE FITS?

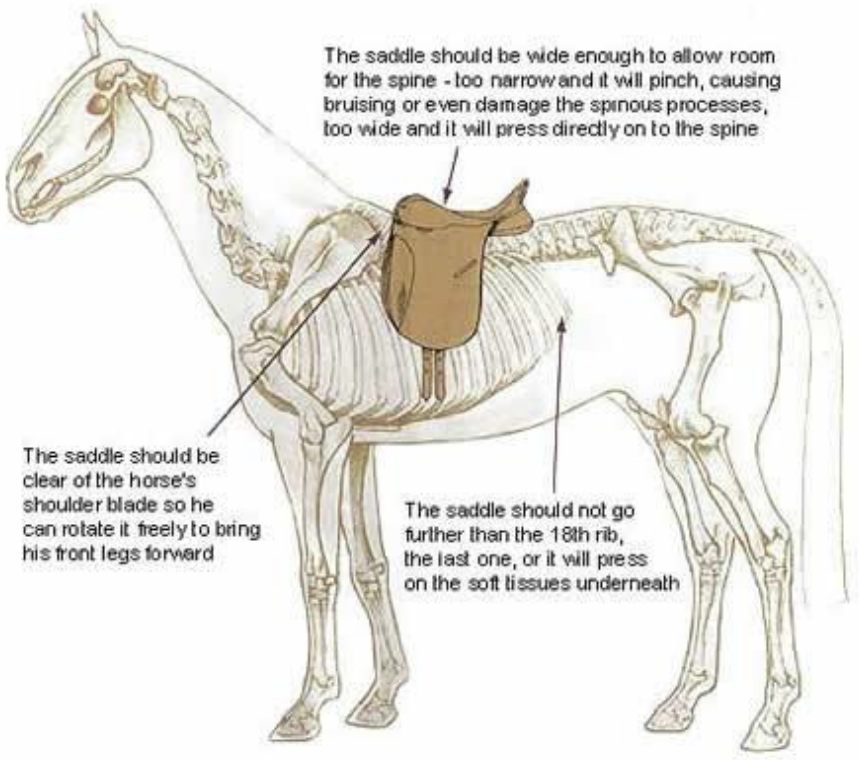
1. THERE MUST BE 2-3 FINGERS CLEARANCE FROM WITHER TO SADDLE

2. WHEN STANDING BEHIND YOU HORSE YOU MUST BE ABLE TO SEE A CLEAR SPACE ALL THE WAY ALONG YOUR HORSES BACK

3. THE BASE OF THE SADDLE MUST NOT COME PAST THE LAST RIB OF YOUR HORSE

If you are happy with the basic fit of the saddle then try riding in it to assess how it fits you, as a general rule there should be 1 hand space in front & 1 hand space behind but most of all you & your horse should feel relaxed & comfortable in the saddle.

For the more experienced horse owner you may now be confident that the saddle fits but SADDLES DIRECT always advises that you firstly read the following SADDLE FITTING…ESSENTIAL GUIDE for more in depth advice & secondly but most importantly that you contact your local MASTER SADDLER for professional advice.



PLEASE NOTE AECC OFFER ALL SADDLE FITTING ADVICE AS A GUIDE ONLY & IN NO WAY EXECUTE THIS ADVICE AS ANY GUARANTEE THAT THE SADDLE YOU PURCHASE FITS YOUR HORSE IT IS THE OWNERS RESPONSIBILITY TO ENSURE CORRECT FIT THROUGH QUALIFIED PERSONS ONLY

Saddle Fitting

1.Your saddle, new or second-hand, should be fitted by a **MEMBER OF THE SOCIETY OF MASTER SADDLERS**. Their first consideration will always be the horse. This may mean that you need to adjust any preconceived ideas you may have about your own preferences in relation to make and design.

2. If you MUST use a numnah or gel pad the saddle fitter must be informed at the time of the original enquiry - and always before the saddle is fitted. Adding a numnah under a saddle which fits well without it is akin to putting thick insoles into shoes that fit perfectly without them.

3. Each horse should have its own saddle. Just as a pair of shoes adapts to the wearer's foot, so the saddle adopts the contours of the horse. Ill advised riders use one saddle on several horses ('it cuts down on tack cleaning'…'I ride better in that particular saddle'…) without pausing to consider possible consequences.

4. It may be possible to adjust your existing saddle to fit your new horse - but the advice of a qualified saddle fitter should always be sought.

5. Your horse changes shape regularly. The frequency of these changes will relate to his age, training, management and so on. Try to develop an eye to recognise these changes. Viewed on a daily basis, the changes may seem inconsequential but over a period of just a week or so they can be surprisingly substantial. Have your saddle checked - and any necessary adjustments made - regularly.

6. 'Feed' your saddle carefully. Insufficiently treated the leather will dry out. Fed too much, the dressing will not be absorbed and the saddle will be unpleasantly sticky - possibly marking your clothes, or worse, causing the saddle stitching to rot. The regularity with which the saddle requires 'dressing' relates to usage, weather conditions and so on.

7. The young horse must be fitted especially carefully. His - or her - back is 'virgin territory' and very precious. Great care must be taken to avoid any damage that may cause problems later in life. Young horses should never be lunged in any old saddle ('it doesn't matter - no-one is going to ride in it'). The young back is particularly vulnerable and a swinging/bouncing saddle that doesn't fit anyway - and may even be damaged - can be the cause of veterinary problems that may be irreversible. Recognise, too, that some young horses develop at a substantial rate and the saddle that fitted well only a short time previously may need adjustment.

8. The standard general purpose saddle is a compromise and can never fulfil the needs of individual disciplines as well as saddles designed specifically.

9. Unlevelness, even slight, in your horse's gait - especially behind - can cause the saddle to move/gyrate thus possibly exacerbating the existing problem.

10. Mounting from a mounting block should not be restricted to the less-than-athletic! It is infinitely better for the horse's back and guards against the saddle tree becoming twisted - quite easy to happen if the saddle is regularly used as a lever.

11. When mounting the rider's weight should always be lowered gently into the saddle - never 'thump' or 'bang'

12. If you insist on mounting from the ground be aware that the stirrup leathers should be changed from side to side regularly to avoid the near-side leather becoming longer/stretched.

13. Saddles should be carefully stored on a well-made saddle horse or rack. Never position saddles where they can be knocked off the rack. Appreciate that lifting a saddle onto a very high rack can damage your own back - and often results in the saddle being stored lop-sidedly.

14. Great attention must always be played to the condition of the saddle flocking. Irregular/uneven/lumpy flocking can cause pressure points that may seriously damage the horse's back. Severe irregularity in the flocking can cause the saddle to sit to one side. Correct flocking provides a cushioning effect that helps to reduce trauma. Over stuffed, the saddle will be hard, will not adapt to the horse's back and may cause pressure sores or sensitivity.

15. The saddle must always be level when viewed from the side. Anything else compromises the horse's

comfort and welfare. 'Up-hill' the rider will sit too far back. 'Down-hill the rider will be encouraged onto the fork.

16. When viewed from the front and rear the saddle gullet must always provide adequate clearance - both before and after the horse is exercised.

17. Most equine insurance can be extended to include theft of tack. Some policies even include accidental damage. Important considerations - but do read the small print 'exclusions' carefully before signing up.

18. It is important to ask the saddler to check any saddle in use when a horse falls. 'Hidden' damage may be substantial - broken/cracked trees can be difficult to detect.
Likewise, if the saddle falls from the saddle rack or is dropped it should be checked over by a qualified saddler.

19. The size of the stirrup irons should be checked when a different rider exercises the horse. Irons that are either too small or too large can be the cause of serious accidents.

20. Weak or defective stitching on any part of the saddle should be repaired instantly. Saddles should be checked every time they are used; equal attention should be paid to girths and leathers