LIVINGSTON COUNTY 4-H HORSE PERFORMANCE LEVEL II

To test any Level, 4-Hers are required to wear long pants and boots, leather shoes or tennis shoes. No sandals, thongs or bare feet.

LEVEL II

1. Member must have passed and met the requirements of LEVEL I.
2. Name and locate 20 parts of the horse (excluding eyes, ears, mane, tail, hooves, upper and lower lip and forelock).
3. Clean a horse's feet safely and correctly and know the proper care of the feet.
4. Participate in a least one Livingston County 4-H point approved horse show, fair or Achievement Days (work or show) in the last or current year. Form is provided for signature of the show secretary.
5. Know how to cool out an overheated horse.
6. Know the parts of the English and Western saddles and the proper fitting of each to the horse.
7. Know the parts of the English (hunt type) snaffle bridle and English full or double bridle and the Western split eared bridle. Explain the proper fitting of a snaffle bit and a curb bit to the horse.
8. Tie a bow line knot (non-slip).

SUGGESTED REFERENCES FOR LIVINGSTON COUNTY 4-H HORSE PERFORMANCE LEVELS (OTHERS MAY BE USED)

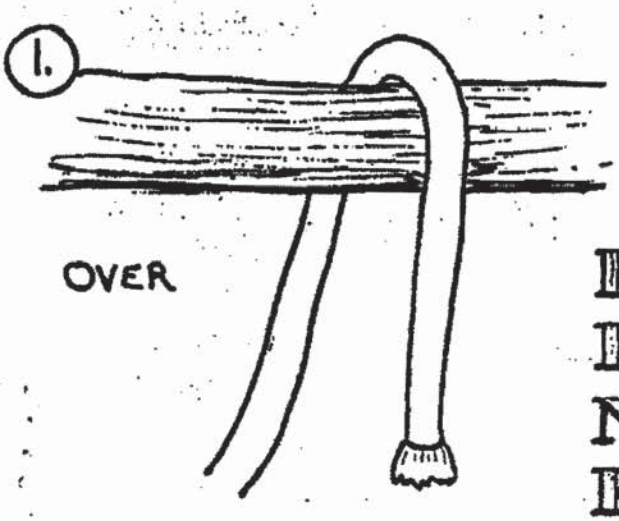
ALL BOOKS AND REFERENCES ARE AVAILABLE AT THE MSU EXTENSION OFFICE 517-546-3950
*IN ANY AREA THAT THE REFERENCE SOURCES DO NOT COVER ALL THE INFORMATION OR YOU ARE UNCLEAR OF WHAT IS BEING ASKED PLEASE CONTACT YOUR 4H HORSE LEADER OR THE LEVELS COORDINATOR FOR A DETAILED EXPLANATION.
** 4-H BULLETIN 4H1228 AND 4H1229 ARE AVAILABLE AT THE MSU EXTENSION LIVINGSTON COUNTY
*** The current edition of 4H Horse & Pony Rules and Regulations 4H1145 is available online at http://4h.msue.msu.edu/4h/resources/mi_4h_horse_show_rules .

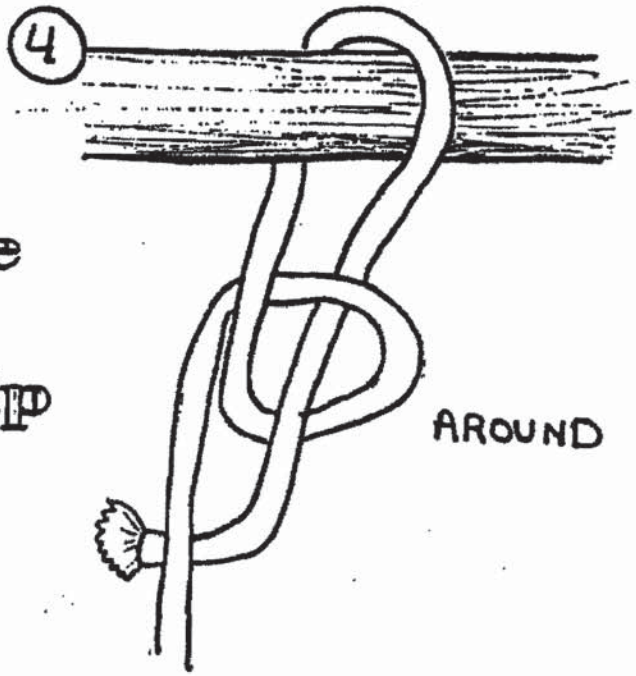
LEVEL II

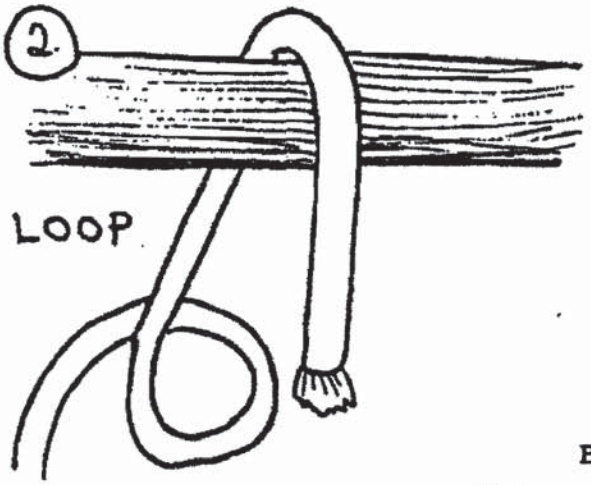
1. Check with the Levels Coordinator
2. Horses and Horsemanship page 8
3. Horses and Horsemanship pages 47-50
4. Exhibit or volunteer and get signature from the show secretary at a Livingston County 4H Point Approved Show, fair, or Achievement Days. Turn the signed form into the Levels Coordinator by August 31st.
5. Horses and Horsemanship page 36
6. Horses and Horsemanship pages 27-34
7. Horses and Horsemanship pages 28-31
8. Information on the bowline knot is available from your leader, levels coordinator or MSU Extension Office.

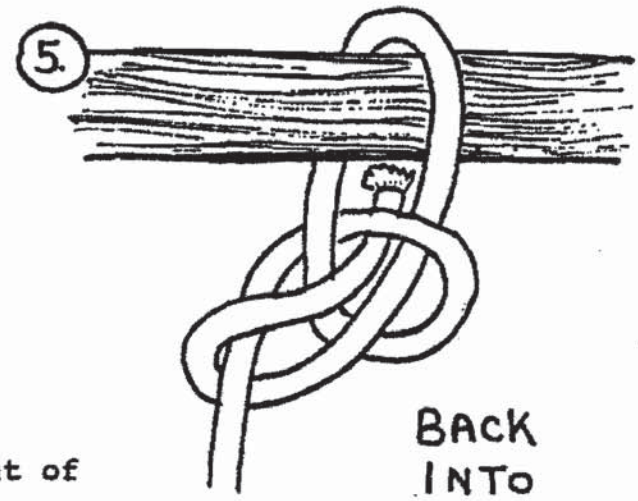
Bowline Knot- Non-Slip Knot

LEVEL II



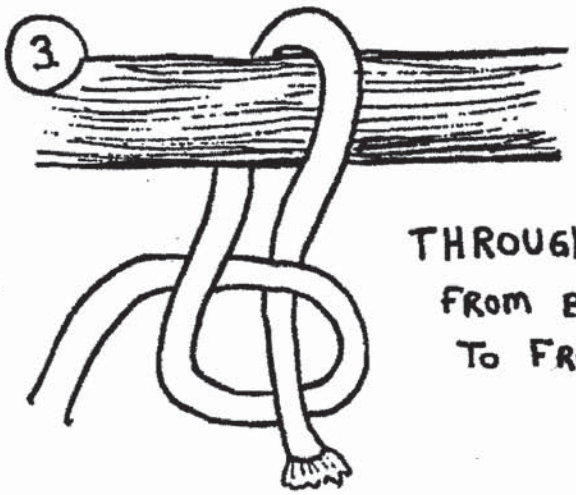


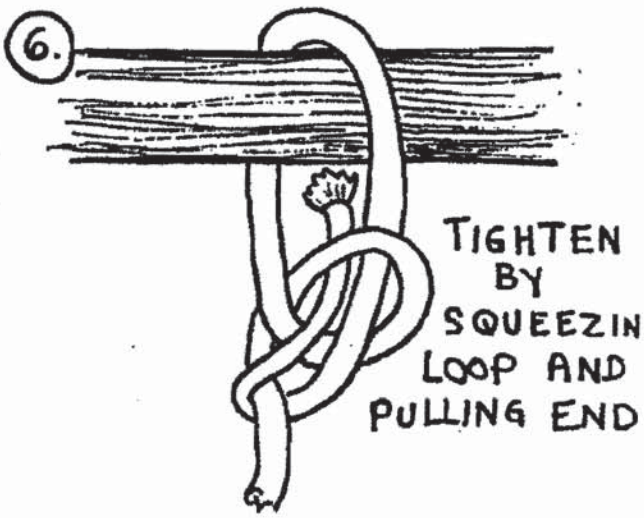




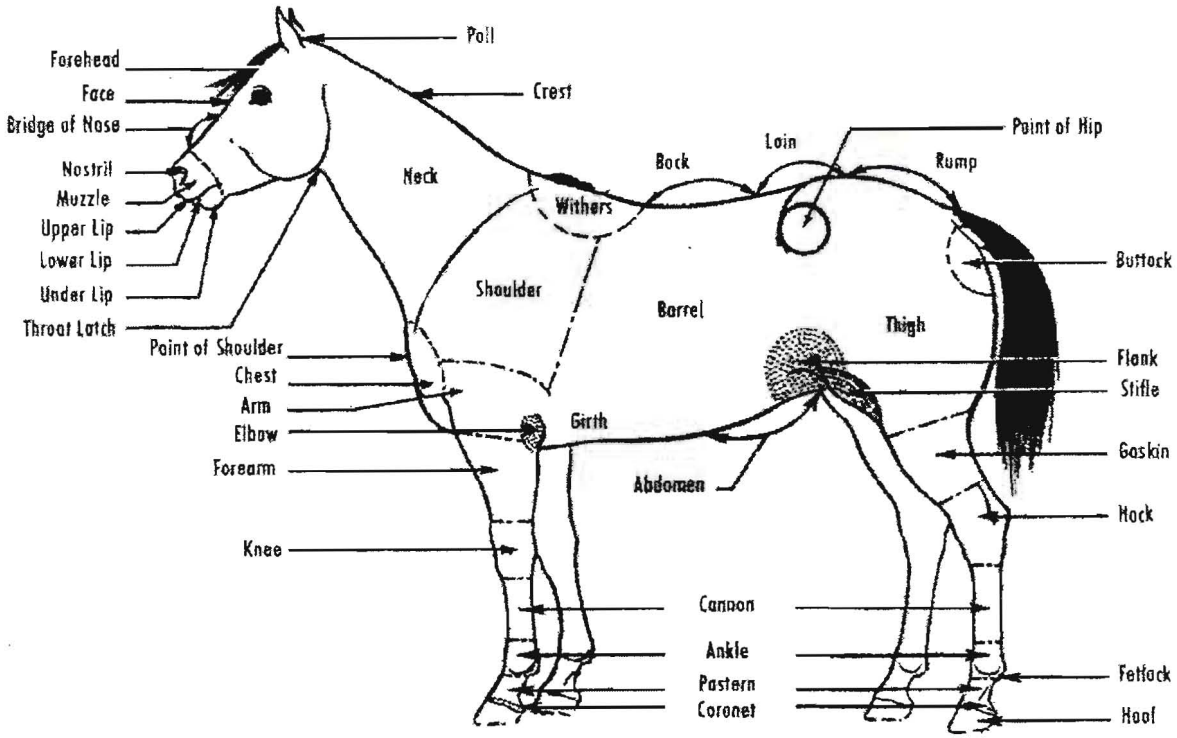
BOWLINE RHYME

"The rabbit runs out of
its hole, (3)
Around the tree, (4)
And back into its hole." (5)



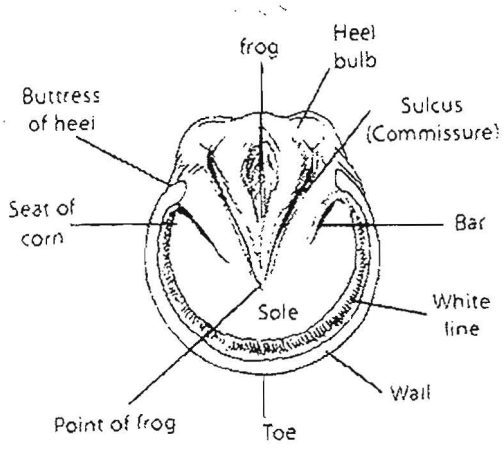


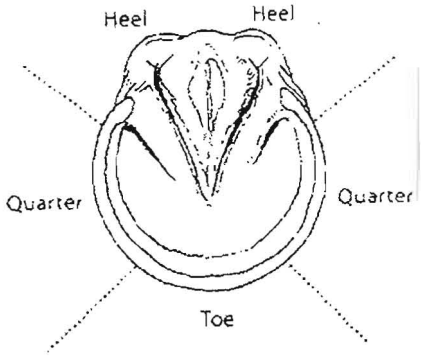
PARTS OF HORSE

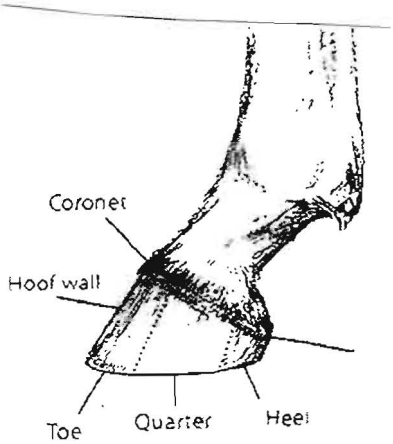


Parts of a Horse

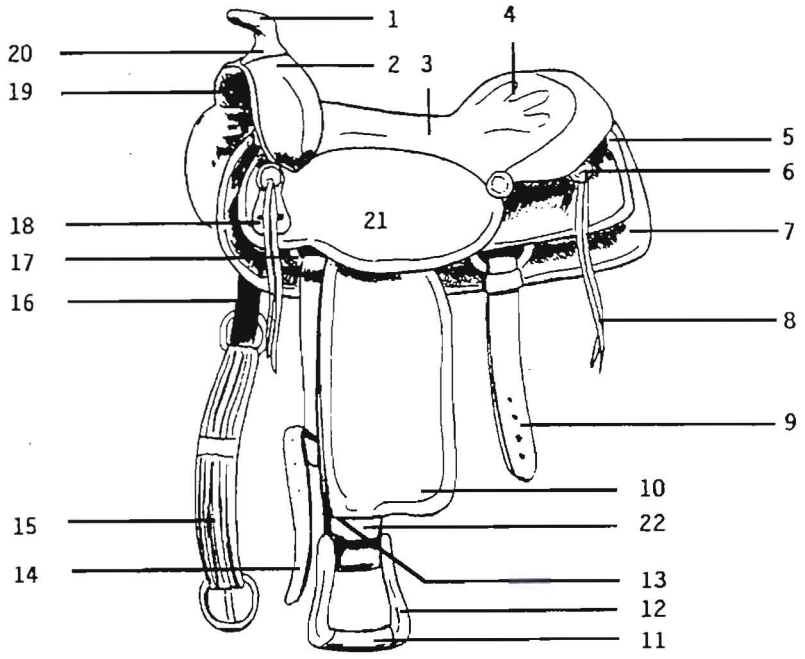
PARTS OF HOOF

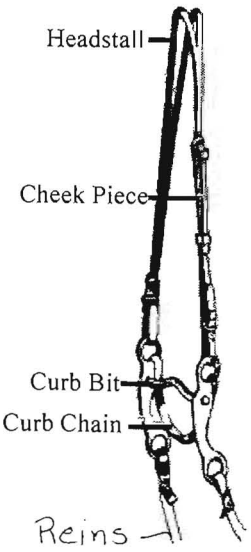




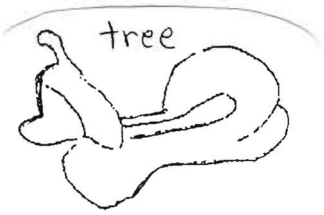


PARTS OF WESTERN SADDLE AND SPLIT EAR BRIDLE

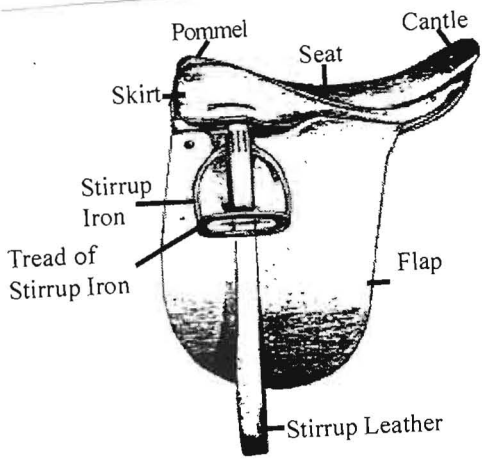


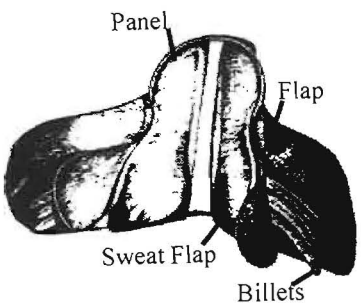


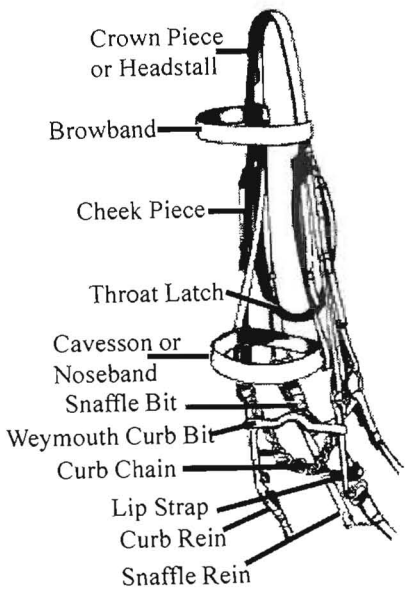
1. Horn
2. Swells
3. Seat
4. Cantle
5. Rear Housing or Back Jockey
6. Concha
7. Skirts
8. Saddle Strings
9. Rear Billet
10. Fender
11. Tread Cover
12. Stirrup
13. Stirrup Leather (inside)
14. Full Latigo
15. Cinch
16. Off Billet
17. Rigging Dee or Ring
18. Latigo Carrier
19. Gullet
20. Pommel
21. Seat Jockey
22. Stirrup Leather Keeper

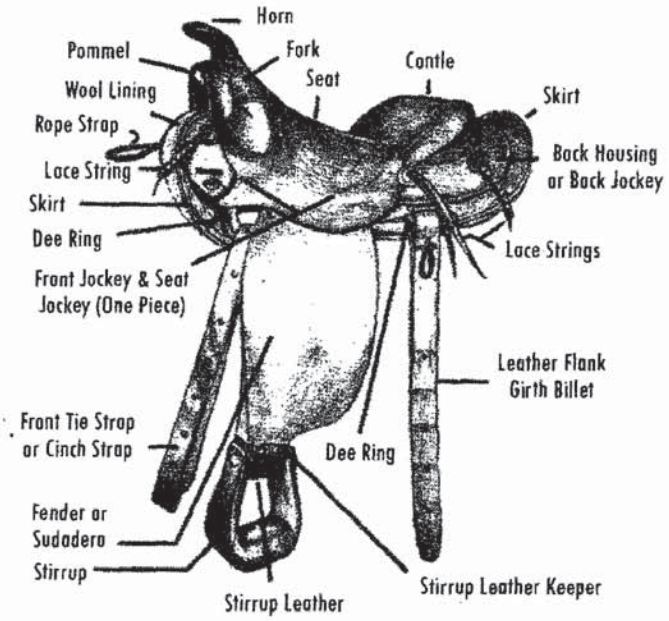


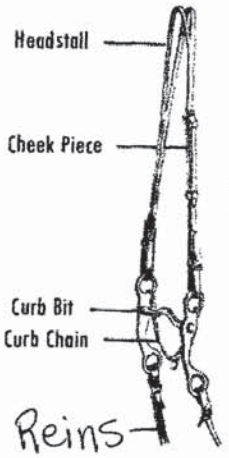
PARTS OF ENGLISH SADDLE AND DOUBLE BRIDLE

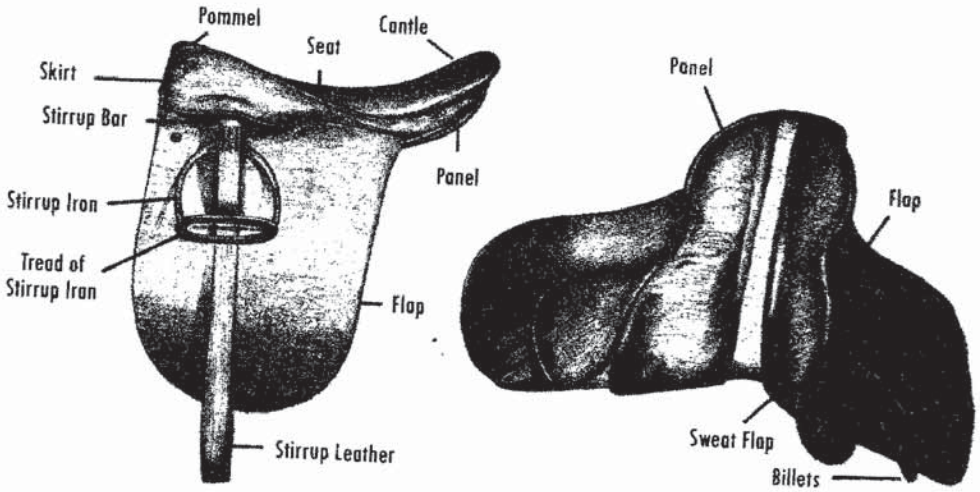




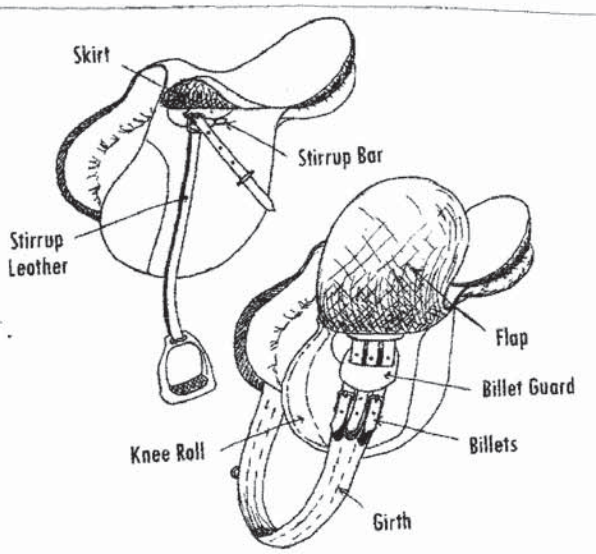


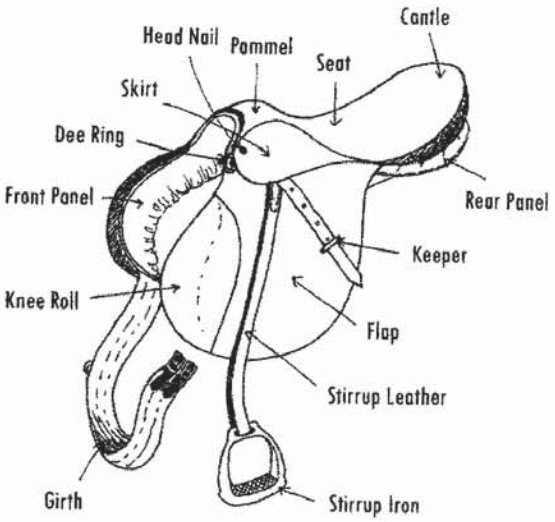

Horn
Pommel
Fork
Seat
Cantle
Skirt
Wool Lining
Rope Strap
Back Housing
or Back Jockey
Lace String
Skirt
Dee Ring
Lace Strings
Front Jockey & Seat
Jockey (One Piece)
Leather Flank
Girth Billet
Front Tie Strap
or Cinch Strap
Dee Ring
Fender or
Sudadero
Stirrup
Stirrup Leather
Stirrup Leather Keeper

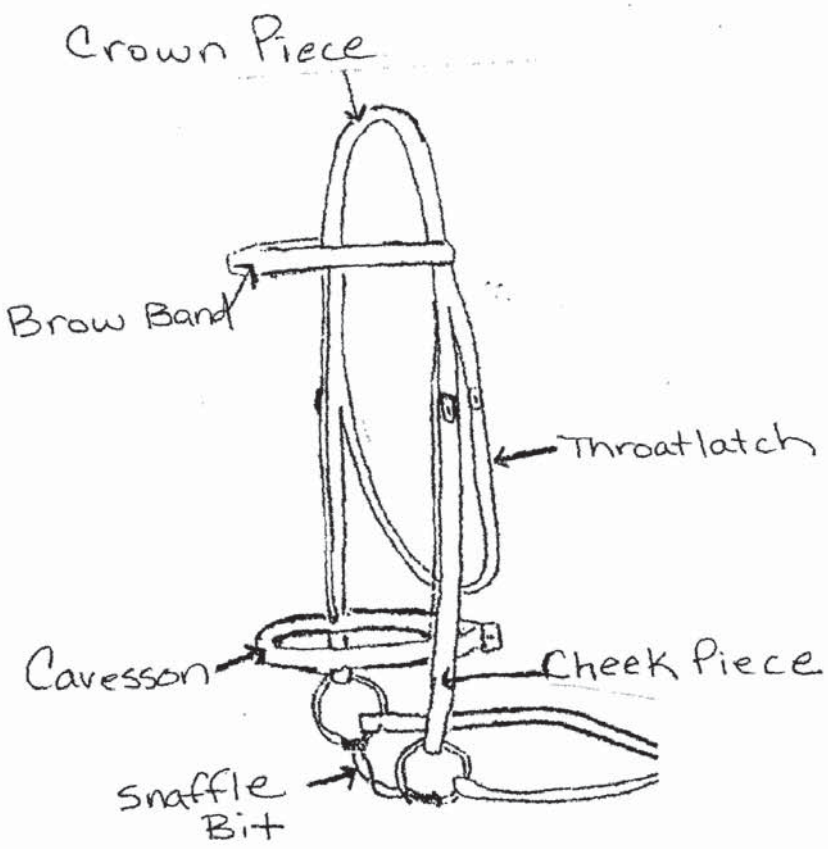

Headstall
Cheek Piece
Curb Bit
Curb Chain
Reins



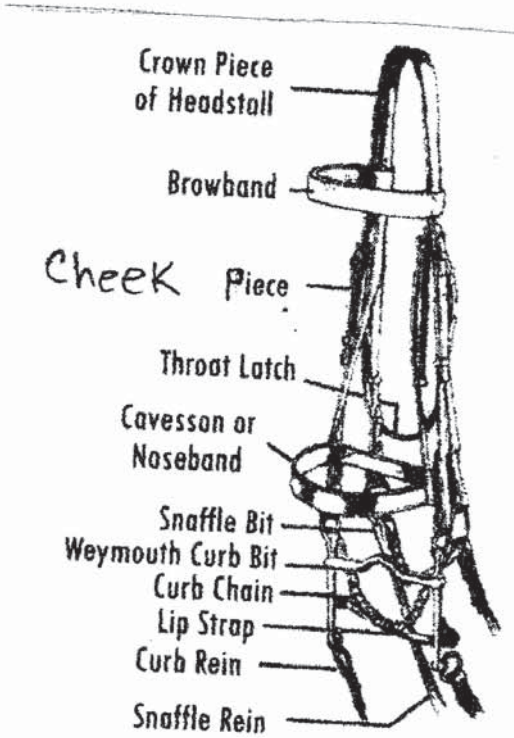
English Saddle







English Hunt Bridle



English Full Bridle

Level II

CHAPTER TEN

FOOT CARE

Clean hoofs before and after riding.

IMPORTANCE OF FOOT CARE

Farrier. A horse shoer.

Hoof. The foot as a whole on horses. The curved covering of horn over the foot.

Laminae. The horny-grooved inside of the hoof, and on the outside front of the coffin bone.

The value of a horse depends on its ability to perform work. To this end, four sound feet are indispensable. Oddly enough, foot troubles and the necessity for shoeing are largely man-made.

The wild horse seems to have been practically free from serious foot trouble. The important points in the care of a horse's feet are to keep them clean, prevent them from drying out, and trim them so they retain proper shape and length. You should learn the names for the parts of a horse's foot.

Each day, clean the feet of horses' that are shod, stabled, or used. Use the hoof pick for cleaning. Work from the heel toward the toe. Be sure to clean out the depressions between the frog and the bars. While you are cleaning the feet, inspect for loose shoes and thrush. Thrush is a disease of the foot characterized by a pungent odor. It causes a softening of tissues in the cleft of the frog and bars. This disease produces lameness and, if not treated, can be serious.

Hooves occasionally become dry and brittle. Dry, brittle hooves may split and cause lameness. The frog loses its elasticity and no longer is effective as a shock absorber. If the dryness is prolonged, the frog shrinks in size and the heel contracts. If the hooves of a shod horse become too dry, either pack them in wet clay once or twice a week after the horse has been used, or attach burlap sacks around them. Keep the sacks moistened. After the hoof has absorbed enough moisture, brush on a hoof dressing such as neat's-foot oil. Before each soaking with burlap, remove the oil.

Trim the feet so that the horse stands square and plumb. This will alleviate strain on the tendons and help prevent deformity, improper action and unsoundness.

The healthy hoof grows 3/8 to 1/2 inch per month. If the hoof is not trimmed, the wall will break off and will not wear evenly. To prevent this, trim the hooves regularly, about once a month,* whether the horse is shod or not. Use nippers (scissors like tool used to trim the hoof) to trim off the horn; level the wall with a rasp (a course file). Hooves grown too long either in the toe or heel cause incorrect foot posture. The slope is considered normal when the toe of the hoof and the pastern have the same angle. This angle should be kept always in mind and changed only as a corrective measure. If it should become necessary to correct uneven wear of the hoof, correct gradually over a period of several trimmings.

* Trim every 6 to 8 weeks

Trim the hoof near the level of the sole-otherwise it will split off if the horse remains unshod. Trim the frog carefully. Remove only ragged edges that allow filth to accumulate in the crevices. Trim the sole sparingly, if at all.

Never rasp the outside wall of the hoof. This removes the periople, or thin varnish like outer layer provided by nature as a protective coating that prevents evaporation.

HOOF CARE HINTS

Begin when the foal is only a few months old.

Keep feet well rounded.

Exercise foals on dry ground to allow natural wear.

If kept in a stall, rasp down every two to three weeks.

Clean soles and clefts of frog frequently.

Do not pare out sole, just clean.

Do not trim away healthy frog unless there is clearly an excess. (See illustration A.)

Keep foot straight with angle of short pastern.

Front hoof-to-ground angle should be approximately 45 degrees. (See illustration B.)

Rear hoof-to-ground angle should be approximately 50 degrees. (See illustration B.)

Rasp sharp edge of hoof wall to make bearing surface approximately true thickness of wall. (See illustration C.)

Do not rasp outside wall.

Always rasp in such a manner that the heel is included in each stroke. (See illustration D.)

Illustration A

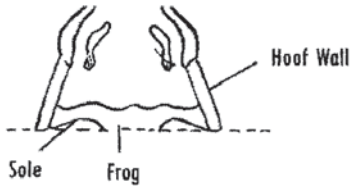
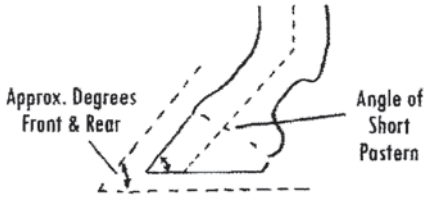


Illustration B



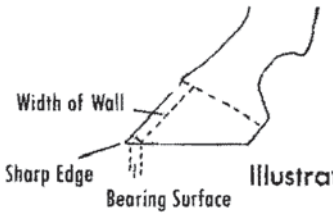
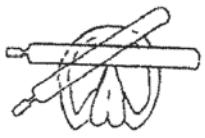


Illustration C

Illustration D

Not Like This



Like This

HOOF PROBLEMS

Lameness results when a horse travels in a manner inconsistent with its natural way of going.

Founder (or laminitis) is a serious ailment of the sensitive laminae possibly caused by overeating grain or lush pasture, too much water when the horse is hot, overwork or inflammation of the uterus following foaling. Occurs more often in the fore feet, but can affect all feet. Prompt treatment by a veterinarian may prevent permanent injury.

Ringbone is new bone growth on the long pastern bone, short pastern bone or coffin bone, occurring generally in the fore feet.

Corns are a bruise of the sole at the angle of the wall and the bar of the hoof. The bruising is more common in the front feet.

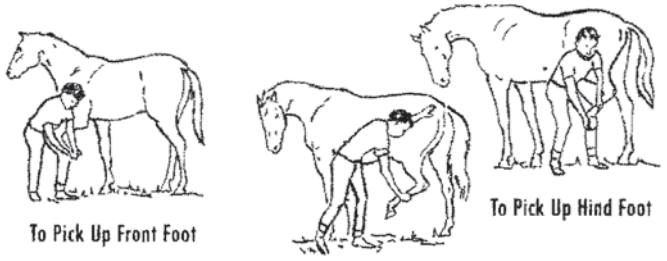
Cracks in the wall of the hoof start at the bottom of the hoof and extend varying lengths up the hoof wall. They may originate at the coronary band and extend down the hoof wall. Often called sand cracks. Cracks are identified by their location; toe, quarter or heel crack, and may be found in either the fore or hind feet.

Gravel is an actual infection of the sensitive portions of the hoof that gains access through cracks in the white line on the sole. The infection may break through at the caranary band and begin draining.

Navicular Disease is an inflammation of the navicular bone of the fore foot. The cause may be disease or injury to the navicular bone, resulting in possible lameness.

Thrush is a disease of the frog of the horse's foot, caused by unsanitary conditions and bacteria. The infection is usually black and strong smelling. It is located in the frog in the commissure or sulcus.

An unshapely hoof causing uneven wear may make foals become unsound of limb. Faulty limbs may be helped or even corrected by regular and persistent trimming. This practice tends to educate the foal, making it easier to shoe at maturity. If the foal is run on pasture, trimming the feet may be necessary long before weaning time. Check the feet ever four to six weeks. Trim a small amount each time rather than an excessive amount at longer intervals.



Foot Inspection

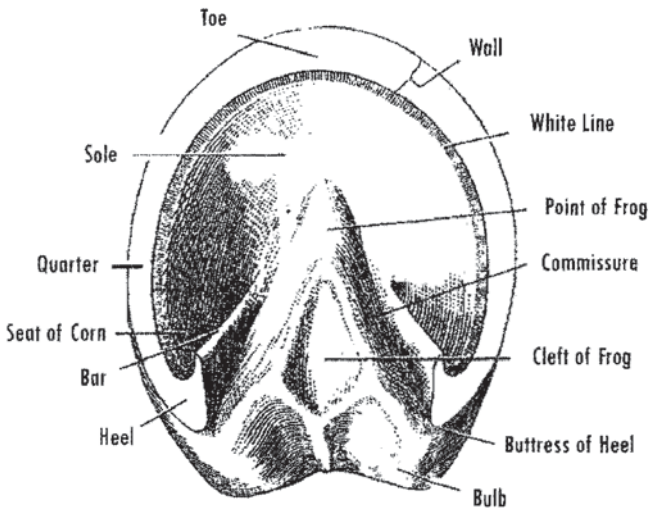
Before trimming the feet, inspect the foal while it is standing squarely on a hard surface. Then watch it walk and trot.

Careless trimming may strain the foal's tendons.

FUNCTIONS OF THE HOOF

The three main functions of the hoof are: shock absorption, locomotion and circulation. The heel and frog strike the ground slightly before the toe. There is a slight expansion of the softer tissue (plantar cushion and sensitive frog), which aids in shock absorption.

The deep flexor tendon, attached to the coffin bone and hoof, flexes the hoof for each step of locomotion. The extensor tendon is attached to the coffin bone and causes the extension of the hoof at each step.



The plantar cushion acts as a sponge where blood pools when the pressure on the hoof decreases. As the foot strikes the ground, pressure causes the plantar cushion to compress, forcing blood into the veins and up the leg.

REASONS FOR SHOEING

The foot and leg are engineered to minimize shock and road concussion, shoes are needed to protect the hoof when wear may exceed the growth. Allowing a horse to wear the same shoes too long may invite trouble. Since the hoof wall grows out perpendicularly to the coronary band, the horse's base of support actually grows out from under the horse if shoes are left on too long. This transfers excessive strain to flexor tendons. Shoes worn too long become thin and loose, bend dangerously and may shift, causing shoe-nail punctures or "corns."

Shoes protect the hoof against excessive wear when unusual work is required. They provide better traction under unfavorable conditions of terrain, such as ice and mud. They help correct defects of stance or gait, often making it possible for an unsound horse to render satisfactory service. Shoes may be used to help cure disease or defective hooves (contracted heels, thrush, tendons). They

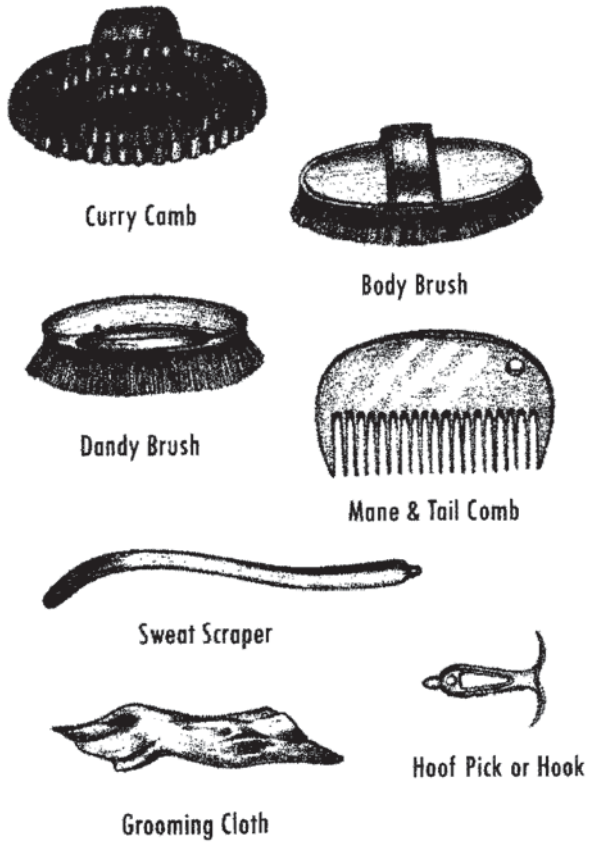
Grooming cloth. Old bath towels or a woolen blanket can be cut into pieces of suitable size. These are used to wipe around the eyes, nostrils, ears, lips, dock and sheath. A grooming cloth is used to give a final polish to the haircoat and to aid in drying off the coat of a wet, sweating horse. Sometimes a clean, damp sponge is used to clean around the face.

Mane and tail comb. This small metal comb is sometimes used instead of the brush to keep the mane and tail free of tangles. The comb is used to aid in thinning heavy, shaggy manes and tails by plucking or pulling out some of the excess hair.

Clippers and/or scissors. In order to have your horse presented in a neat, trim appearance, it is necessary to clip or trim the hair in certain areas of the body. An electric animal hair clipper with sharp blades is necessary to do a smooth clipping job on many areas such as the mane and legs. Sometimes scissors are used, but with them it is usually more difficult to do a smooth job.

STEPS IN ROUTINE GROOMING

Most horsemen develop a procedure that they follow in grooming. The following steps are routine with many.



COOLING OUT

Level II

If the horse has just returned from exercise, the tack should be removed and quickly put aside. If the horse is wet from sweating, the haircoat should be rubbed briskly with a grooming or drying cloth to partially dry the coat. Sponge the eyes, nostrils, lips and dock. The horse should then be blanketed and walked until "cooled out." A couple swallows of water every few minutes aids the cooling out. However, if you do not have time to walk your horse following a hot workout, do not give it free access to water until it has "cooled out." A "cooled out" horse is neither hot to the touch nor breathing hard.

CLEANING THE FEET

Level II

Inspect your horse's feet and legs, and clean out the feet. This is usually the first step if the horse is just leaving the stable or being readied for the show ring. Daily inspection of the feet will give you an opportunity to check for injuries, loose shoes, small stones or other objects that may have become embedded in the foot and thrush, a diseased condition of the frog of the foot.

Follow a procedure when cleaning the feet so that your horse will know what to expect. Most horsemen work around the horse in a counter-clockwise direction - starting with the near fore foot, then near hind, the off hind, and off fore.

To pick up the fore foot, stand beside your horse's shoulder facing his rear. Place the hand nearest the horse on its shoulder and run your other hand gently but firmly down

the back of the leg until the hand is just above the fetlock. Grasp the fetlock area with the fingers and at the same time press your other hand against the horse's shoulder, thus forcing its weight onto the opposite foreleg. Pick up the foot and support the horse's leg on your knee.

The hind foot is picked up in much the same fashion except the hind leg is usually grasped just above the fetlock in the cannon. As you press against the horse's hip with your inside hand, lift the foot directly toward you with the other hand so that the leg is bent at the hock. Then move to the rear placing your thigh underneath the fetlock so as to support the leg firmly. Once the underside of the foot is exposed, it is rather simple to clean out and inspect the foot. Work from the heel toward the toe with your hoof pick. Most important is a good cleaning of the bottom of the commissures or depressions between the frog and the bars. The deepest part of each depression is near the heel. It is the part most often cleaned improperly, and is the usual seat of thrush.

If the wall of the foot is dry, brittle and cracked, it is wise to use a hoof dressing on the feet occasionally. The frequency of this will depend on the condition of the feet. For most horses, once a week is enough. Several good commercial hoof dressings are on the market. If your horse is going into the show ring, make sure the wall of the foot is clean. This may require washing with water and a stiff brush to remove caked mud or manure. Hoof dressing or light oil, such as neatsfoot oil, often improves the appearance of feet for show.

GROOMING THE BODY

After the feet have been cleaned, the body is groomed. Some horsemen will go about this job differently than others; but regardless of the procedure, the idea is to remove dirt and dust from the haircoat and skin and bring out sheen and gloss on your horse's body. Some horsemen will use the currycomb in one hand and the brush in the other - using both tools at the same time. Others feel they can do a more thorough job if they completely curry one side of the horse and then use the brush.

The usually procedure is to start on the left or near side, beginning on the neck, then the chest, shoulder, fore leg, back, side, belly, croup, and hind leg. Then move around to the right or off side and follow the same pattern. Then complete the brushing job with the head, mane and tail.

The currycomb is an excellent tool for removing excessive mud, dirt, loose hair, and saddle marks. Unless the horse is extremely dirty, a rubber currycomb is preferred over a metal currycomb. The currycomb is never used over the bony areas - on the head and below the knees and hocks. A vigorous circular motion will prove most effective when currying. Clean the currycomb out frequently by striking it on the back of the brush or the heel of your boot.

Follow the currycomb with the stiff-bristled brush. Effective brushing requires plenty of "elbow grease" plus some "know-how." Short, strong strokes with outward action away from the horse's body removes more dirt than long gliding strokes. A strong, stiffened arm backed up by the weight of your body and vigorous wrist action is necessary to get the hair coat clean. Brush the hair in the direction of its natural lay. Follow the same order as when the currycomb was used, except that in brushing the legs brush down to the hoof. Clean the brush every few strokes with the currycomb.

Station #9

COOLING OUT A HOT HORSE

When a horse is hot and sweaty, he needs to be **cooled down gradually** so that he will be comfortable and will not get chilled. Improper cooling out can make a horse very sick.

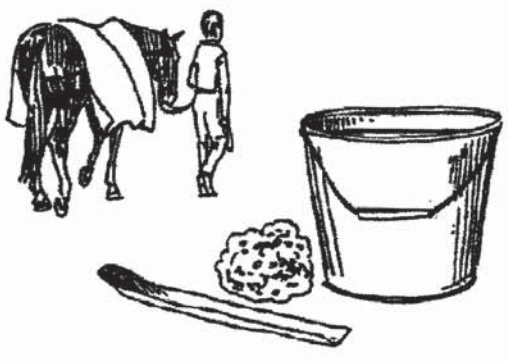
- First, you will need to **walk** a hot, sweaty horse until he is **breathing normally**.
- You should **always walk** for the **last ten minutes** of your ride. This will help you bring your horse in cool.
- If he is very hot and tired, **dismount** and **loosen** the **girth** on the saddle.
- Your horse will be happier if you take off the bridle and replace it with a halter.
- **Leave** the saddle **in place with the girth loose** to let the circulation return to normal slowly in the areas compressed by the saddle. After his **breathing returns to normal**, you may remove the saddle.

If the weather is hot, you may **wash** your **horse** down with **plain water** (*tepid, not hot or cold*) to remove the sweat and salt.

- Use a sweat scraper to squeeze the water out of his coat until he is almost dry.
- Then, **cover him with a cooler** (*a light cover*) if it is breezy and **walk him** around until he **feels dry and cool** when you touch him **between the front legs**.

A hot, tired and sweaty horse may be very thirsty, but he should **not be allowed to gulp large amounts of water,** especially cold water. This can make him seriously ill.

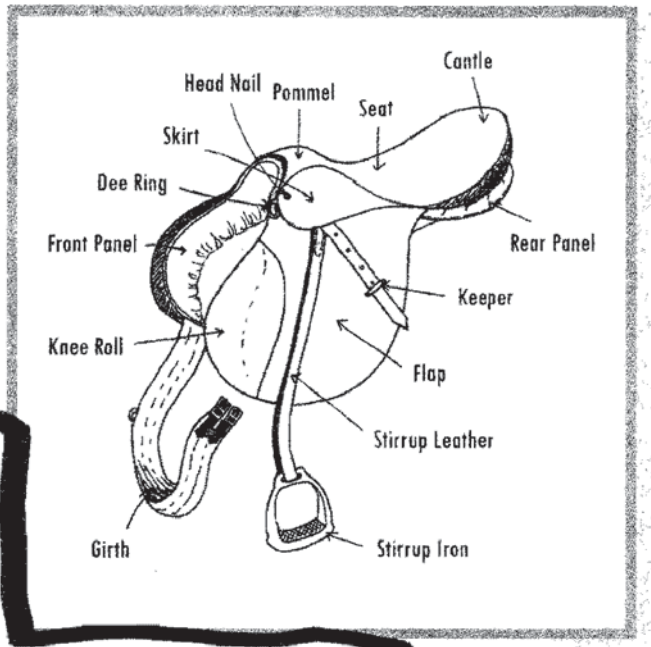
Instead, **set out a pail of slightly warm water** and **walk a large circle**; let him have **a few sips each time you pass the bucket.** By the time he is cool and dry he will probably have had all the water he wants. He can then safely be put in his stall with a bucket of water without becoming sick.



WASH YOUR HORSE DOWN AND COVER HIM WITH A COOLER

working on a flat arena surface, playing polo, jumping fences, or covering rough terrain in a mixture of flat and jumping work, such as foxhunting.

The flaps are cut more forward and may include padded knee rolls to help the rider when riding on the flat or going over jumps. The forward seat saddle may be cut back.



Dressage Saddle

The Dressage saddle is an elongated version of the forward seat saddle, allowing the rider to sit deeper. It gives balance through the seat and allows greater leg contact. The knee roll is optional and depends on rider preference.

Fitting a Saddle

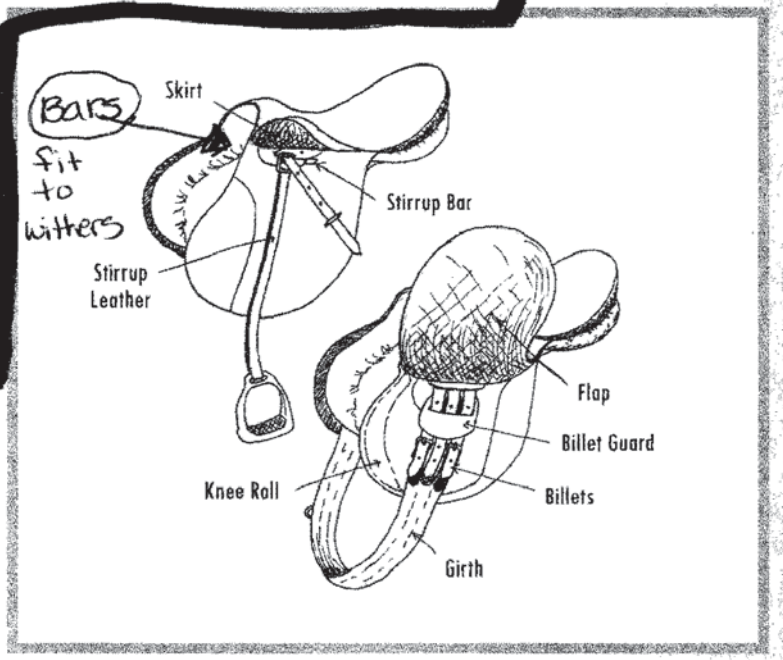
Not every saddle will fit every horse, just like one size and type of shoe will not fit every person. When fitting a saddle to a horse, the conformation of the withers, the length of the back, slope of the shoulder, muscling and spring of the ribcage should be considered. A saddle must fit without pressing on the horse's spine, particularly around the withers, and it should not pinch the shoulder blades. The width of the saddle should fit so that it rests evenly on the horse's back.

3 stacked fingers should fit between pommel and withers.

If the saddle does not clear the withers but instead rests on them, then either the fork or saddle is too wide, or the withers of the horse are too high and narrow, or perhaps both contribute to the problem. In any case, the ill-fitting saddle may cause injury to the withers and will be painful, leading to bucking, head throwing and/or "cinchiness."

Width of the withers should be measured two inches below the top of the withers, to correspond to the fork width of the saddle. Both Western and English tree widths are measured across the bottom of the gullet.

The seat of the Western saddle is measured from the base of the horn to the front center edge of the cantle. The seat of the English saddle is measured from the head nail to the center of the cantle.



SADDLE PADS AND BLANKETS

Saddle blankets or pads serve at least four purposes:

1. To protect the horse's back
2. To absorb sweat and moisture
3. To protect the saddle
4. To help saddles fit better

Snaffle bits are widely-varied in design and material, but all have common features which include: a mouthpiece that is jointed or straight with a ring at each end to which the reins are attached. D-ring, full cheek and egg butt. The thicker the mouthpiece, the milder the bit. Bits giving direct pressure on the corners of the horse's mouth, tongue and (sometimes) bars, but not affecting the poll, fall under the category of "non-leverage bits". A properly fitted snaffle creates one or two small wrinkles next to the corners of a horse's mouth when no pressure is applied. When shanks are added to a mouthpiece, a "leverage" is created which allows the bit to apply pressure even where there is no direct contact -- for instance, on the poll through the crown piece and under the chin (the curb groove) through a curb strap. A **kimberwicke** is like a snaffle except that it has slots atop the rings from which the headstall can be attached with the curb chain attached by hooks. A **pelham** bit acts like a snaffle and curb combined into one mouthpiece. Two sets of reins are used: the "upper" set, attached directly to the rings which lie in line with the mouth piece, works like a snaffle or non-leverage bit, and the lower set, attached to the end of short shanks, works like a curb or leverage bit. **Western** curb bits are available in literally hundreds of shapes and numerous combinations of mouthpieces and shanks. Mouthpieces are usually from 4-1/2" to 5" long with shanks about 3" to 5-1/2" in length. Most curbs with solid mouthpieces have a "bump" known as a port in the middle that relieves pressure on the tongue and applies pressure to the roof of the mouth. The **hackamore** bit is not to be confused with the true hackamore or jaquima. The jaquima consists of a Bosal noseband attached to a headstall which is sometimes used for training young horses. It is not a bit. The hackamore bit, which is jointed and has shanks, simply does not have a mouthpiece. It is considered to be a "leverage"bit.

Curb bit: one wrinkle
Snaffle bit: two wrinkles

Horse Industry Handbook

The first thing to keep in mind with a Western saddle is that it needs to fit your horse properly, especially across the withers. Quarter Horses and stock-type breeds usually do best with a "Quarter Horse tree", while the Arabian horse needs a somewhat wider spread across the withers, or an "Arabian tree." When properly fitted with the cinch (girth) drawn tight, you should be able to easily insert two fingers between the horse's withers and the fork of your saddle (located under the horn and pommel area). The saddle should not touch the top of the withers, but neither should it ride too high and "pinch" the sides of the withers.

Adjusting the Bridle

The bridle needs to fit snugly and to hold the bit in place. When the bridle is properly adjusted, an English snaffle bit will be drawn back against the corners of your horse's mouth, making two wrinkles in his lips. A dressage snaffle may be tighter, a Western snaffle looser. A Western curb bit will just touch the corners of his mouth. There are many different kinds of bits, both English and Western, all of which act somewhat differently on the horse's mouth. Ask your instructor how your particular bit should be adjusted.

The throatlatch should be fastened quite loosely so there is no chance it might interfere with your horse's breathing. You should be able to put three fingers, turned sideways, between the throatlatch and your horse's neck.

The English noseband (cavesson) should be adjusted snugly, not tightly. You should be able to fit one or two fingers between the noseband and your horse's face.

Level II – Fit of Western and English Tack

Western Saddle – must fit the rider (seat size – measured from base of horn to center of cantle – 15" is a medium size). Must fit the horse – the bars of the saddle (front opening that rest just behind the withers) are measured by width – usually semi-QH, full QH, and Arabian. The gullet is the channel underneath the saddle that provides air space along the spine down the center of the back.

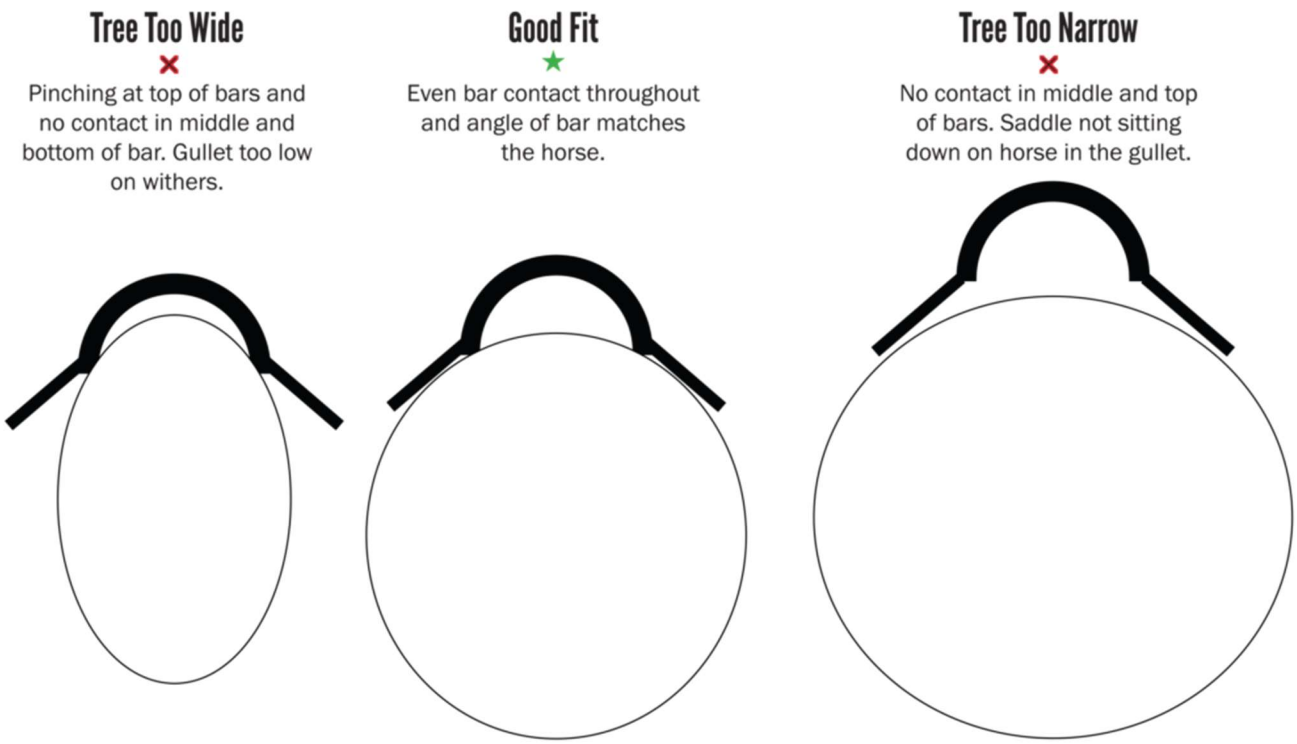
Pommel of saddle should be over the withers. Saddle should appear level and centered. Clearance from withers to pommel should be two to three stacked fingers. A saddle that is too WIDE will be lower than that, and rub on the horse's withers and spine, causing pain, bruising, and saddle sores. A horse in pain will display bad behavior such as "cinchiness", sourness, bucking or rearing. A saddle that is too NARROW will have a higher clearance and tend to roll from side to side while mounting no matter how tight you cinch it.

Western Bridle: Curb bit should be wide enough not to pinch mouth corners (standard size is 5") and there should be one wrinkle at the corner of the mouth for a curb bit. A narrow bit will pinch and cause pain and behavioral problems – rearing or bucking. A bit too low in the horse's mouth will cause loss of control, tongue can get over the bit. A bit too high in the horse's mouth will cause discomfort and behavioral problems. Clearance of chin chain should be two stacked fingers. Clearance for the throat latch, if any, should be a fist to allow for breathing.

English Saddle – must fit the rider (seat size – measured from nail head on front jockey to center of cantle – 17" is a medium size). Must fit the horse – the bars of the saddle (front opening that rest just behind the withers) are measured by width – usually narrow, medium and wide. The gullet is the channel underneath the saddle that provides air space along the spine down the center of the back.

Pommel of saddle should be over the withers. Saddle should appear level and centered. Clearance from withers to pommel should be two to three stacked fingers. A saddle that is too WIDE will be lower than that, and rub on the horse's withers and spine, causing pain and sores. A horse in pain will display bad behavior such as "cinchiness", sourness, bucking or rearing. A saddle that is too NARROW will have a higher clearance and tend to roll from side to side no matter how tight the girth is.

English Bridle: Snaffle bit should be wide enough not to pinch mouth corners (standard size is 5") and there should be two wrinkles at the corner of the mouth for a snaffle bit. A narrow bit will pinch and cause pain and behavioral problems – rearing or bucking. A bit too low in the horse's mouth will cause loss of control, tongue can get over the bit. A bit too high in the horse's mouth will cause discomfort and behavioral problems. Clearance for the throat latch should be a fist to allow for breathing. If the bit design causes pinching at the mouth corners, rubber bit guard rings may be used. They also keep the bit from sliding through the mouth when using one rein.



Examples of Saddle Fit – Gullet fitting over the withers – should have 2 to 3 stacked fingers of clearance when saddle is cinched.