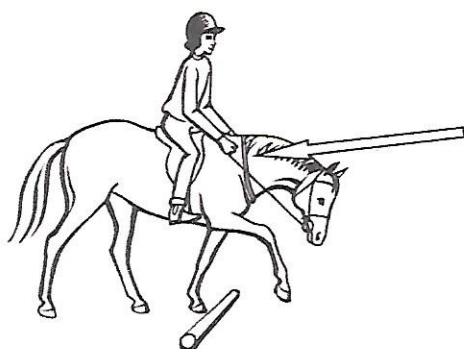


NECK STRAP

- Neck Straps are permitted at all activities.
- This is a simple leather, synthetic fibre, binder twine strap that passes around the horse or pony's neck.
- The neck-strap of a martingale is the neatest, but a stirrup-leather (or even a safely tied lead rope) will do as well.
- It provides the rider, in an emergency, with something to hang on to other than the reins and thus lessen the risk of the horse or pony being pulled/jerked in the mouth.
- It is a great help to riders in rough, hilly country and also when riding a horse with a hogged mane.
- It is essential when riding bareback!
- It can help a nervous rider feel more secure.

It is also essential when teaching a rider or horse to jump and should be fitted one third of the way up the horse or pony's neck.



SADDLES

Correctly fitting fully mounted English type saddle preferred. An all-purpose saddle is best for Pony Club riding. This type of saddle makes it easier to learn a good balanced seat for riding and jumping.

Some types of saddles are not really suitable for Pony Club riding. These are special purpose saddles that are designed to make the rider sit in a certain way for special activities. This can make it difficult to ride with a good all-purpose balanced seat.

1. SADDLES

The saddle **must** be correctly fitted for all Pony Club competitions, official functions and all rallies.

A two finger (approx. 3 cm) width clearance at the wither should be obtained. With the close contact saddles a 1 finger clearance is required when the rider is standing in their stirrups.

All saddles must be designed in such a way as to allow the stirrup leather to slide off easily in the case of a rider being dragged. Hinged stirrup bars must be left straight. If the saddle/pony pad does not have a stirrup bar which allows the stirrup to slide off, correctly fitted clogs must be used in place of stirrup irons.

Western type saddles and ox-bow stirrups are not allowed for Pony Club use.

Particular attention should first be paid to the fit of parts that could cause discomfort or danger, i.e. saddle pressing on spine. The saddle must always be clear of the spine for its entire length (viewed from behind) and not pinching the withers. The weight should be evenly distributed on the muscles either side of the spine – a saddle should be straight on the back with a central seat.

The saddle must be the right size for both the horse and the rider. A correctly fitted saddle distributes the rider's weight evenly – eliminating pressure spots and allows the horse to move its back and shoulders freely. It also sits the rider in a central, balanced position to enable the rider to properly use their seat and legs at all paces.

Check all leather, synthetic parts for signs of splits, torn holes and rotting stitching.

Gel pads, air pads, wedge pads and cushion pads of all types can be helpful to the comfort of the horse. *However, if they are used to overcome the problem of a badly fitting saddle, then they are often quite useless.* This is the case when a saddle has a channel that is too narrow – the pad then serves only to narrow it even further.

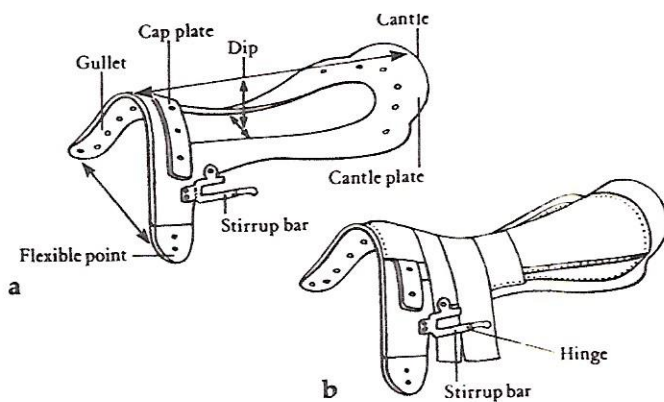
A saddle cloth's purpose is only to absorb sweat, not to pad up an ill fitting saddle.

Horses change shape

- as they muscle up from work
- as they mature
- as they age (over 20)
- between seasons depending on the pasture in their paddock
- with any change in their general health

which means the horse's saddle fit should be checked every few months.

2. PARTS OF A SADDLE

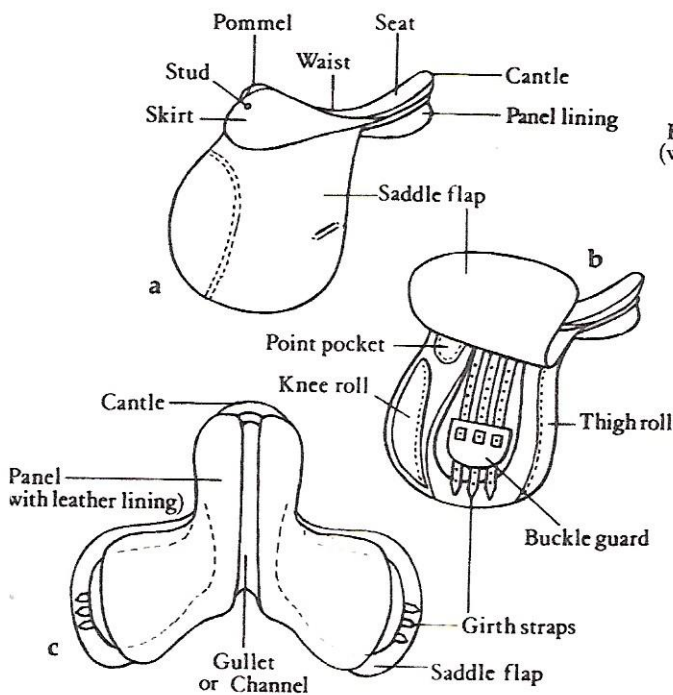


Structure of the Saddle

- a. The Tree
- b. Tree with webbing stretched along and across

The Tree is the foundation of any saddle. The size and width of the Tree determines the size and width of the saddle.

The Tree must fit the horse, if it does not, the saddle will never be satisfactory no matter how many modifications are made.



Parts of the Saddle

- a. From the side
- b. Under the flap
- c. Underneath
- d. Alternative to (b)