

SADDLES AND GIRTHS

Both horse and rider benefit from a saddle. It stops the horse's spine from digging into the rider, and spreads the rider's weight evenly across the horse's back, avoiding the spine. Saddles are built around a frame called a tree. Protect the tree by storing a saddle on a rack. If the tree breaks, the saddle is useless and hurts the horse. Buy the best saddle you can afford. The best ones are made of leather or a high-quality synthetic. Some cheaper saddles do not last as long. If you buy a secondhand saddle, make sure the tree, stitching, and leather are in good repair.

THE SADDLE



Types of saddles

There are different types of saddles for different purposes, such as jumping and dressage, or general-purpose saddles for nonspecialist riders. Western saddles are ornate, because they were a cowboy's status symbol, and heavy, because they had to withstand the stresses imposed when a lariat was attached to the horn in front of the rider.



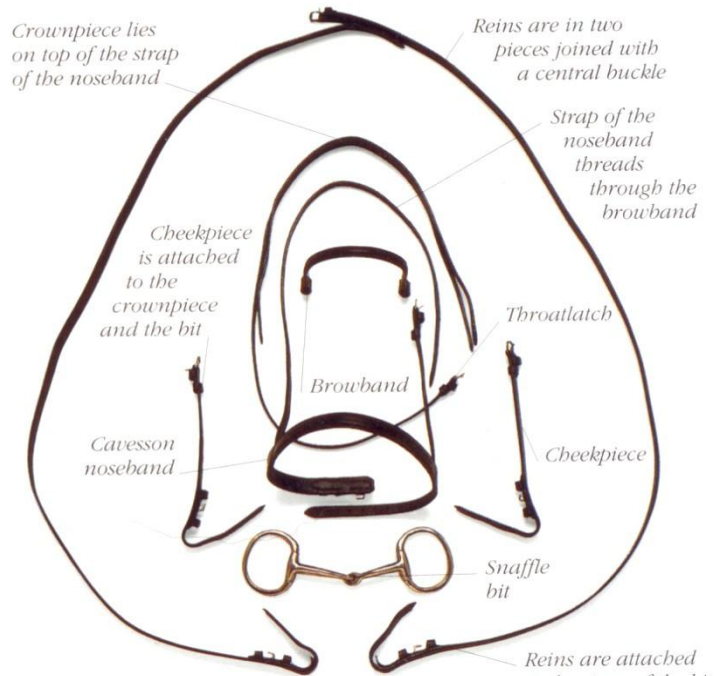
BRIDLES AND BITS

The bridle enables the rider to control the horse's head, and with it the speed and direction of the horse. There are many different bridles and bits, which are designed to have different effects on the horse. The bridle is the most important part of communication with the horse when it is being ridden, so try to ride your horse in the simplest bridle and bit possible. Change the bridle only to get more precise control over a willing and well-trained horse, not as a means of controlling an unwilling one.

THE BRIDLE

The parts of a snaffle bridle

This simple bridle consists of one set of reins, a crownpiece and throatlatch, a browband, a noseband, two cheekpieces, and a bit. The separate pieces can be taken apart for cleaning, for attaching a different type of noseband or bit, or for substituting a piece that fits better.



Reins are attached to the rings of the bit with the fastenings on the inside

Thread the throatlatch through the reins and buckle it up

Storing

When off the horse, the bridle should be hung from the crownpiece. It is best to use a broad circular or semi-circular support so that the leather is not bent too sharply.

Do not store the bridle, or any tack, in a damp place, because the leather will get moldy and deteriorate.

Wrap the noseband around the cheekpieces and secure by the keepers

Hang the reins symmetrically



Bridle fitted to the horse

Cavesson noseband fits under the cheekpieces

Bit must be attached the right way around so that when in the mouth it will fit over the horse's tongue and not pinch it

Throatlatch fastens on the left side

