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Impair Healthy Healing In People Over The Age Of 30!

Saddle – Finding The Perfect Tack

By Sebastian Romero

The quality of equipment is important to any sport - but in horseriding, it is even more vital. The safety and comfort of both the rider and the horse depend upon the tackle, and most obviously, on the saddle. A saddle that is ill-fitting can lead to an un-satisfactory and possibly dangerous ride. It can also cause multiple health problems for the horse.

Unfortunately, many riding stables continue to use old saddles without keeping them in good enough condition. Whether you own a horse, or you or your child visit a stables regularly, it is much safer and more enjoyable to buy your own saddle.

However, buying this piece of equipment through a regular tack dealer or riding stables can be unaffordable, with prices getting into the thousands. The internet offers a wider range of alternatives, whatever you are willing to pay.

There are specialist dealers in customised saddles, or there are places where you can buy or sell high-quality used saddles. You are more likely to find one that is right for you with this amount of choice.

Which saddle you choose will depend on whether you are a beginner or experienced horse rider. For beginners, buying a very expensive product is not recommended. How you ride will change as you learn, and therefore the fit of your saddle may need to change as your riding style evolves. Furthermore, children outgrow saddles like they outgrow clothes, so a mid-price saddle is best for them.

Next you will need to decide between a close contact or an all-purpose saddle.

A close contact saddle has a flatter seat, and minimised knee-roll, so that the legs of the rider are closer to the horse. This benefits the connection between the two, but means that a rider must be very exact with his or her leg position. Therefore these saddles are better for a rider with skill and experience.

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The alternative, an all-purpose model, has a larger area of seat and greater knee-rolls, and conventionally has suede at the saddle flap to help position the knee. This can limit the effectiveness of application of the leg, but this is actually what you need as a beginner. Whilst you are a learning, it is better to let the horse do the work, and increase your ability to control it later.

Before buying online, it can be helpful to visit a shop for the fitting. When trying a saddle you should sit at the lowest point of the saddle and let your legs dangle naturally. They should hang very, very slightly behind you, so you can maintain the best riding position.

If you have your own horse, you can also send his measurements to an online dealer, and they may be willing to fit the saddle specially to your requirements.

A good fit and enjoyable ride is not the only benefit of a top-quality, customised saddle. Most riders wish to sell this piece of equipment when they have outgrown it, or circumstances have changed. It is

notoriously difficult to sell cheap tack - but the best saddles can sell for almost the amount you paid second hand!

Find more help at

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Horse Training For Napping Horses

By Andy Curry

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If you ever rode a horse that would stop and refuse to go forward then you would know how absolutely annoying it is.

Why do they stop? Because that's their reaction to a worrisome or unpleasant situation. Even nervous and timid horses can stake themselves to the ground because they are apprehensive about leaving the herd or the barn.

What other reasons are there for napping? One is the horse simply doesn't know what to do. They'd rather stop and stand than move forward. If your horse naps in a place he's familiar with (ie. your home area) then you should check your tack for things like a bad fitting saddle. The pain could finally become unbearable and the horse simply won't move.

Often, horses will react to bad fitting tack by rearing or bucking. So when tack is bad fitting, napping is a pretty good alternative compared to rearing or bucking.

Another place a horse may nap is riding around an unfamiliar area. If he naps during this then it's likely he's doing it out of fear. The same can be true if he sees unfamiliar objects.

A secret tip about nappers is to closely observe where they're napping. If you find they get nappy around certain things then you might spot a pattern. For instance, every time your horse rides by a hay tarp and he stops then that is likely your culprit. But it could be lots of different things. It could be bushes. Trees. Dog pens. Etc.

When trying to solve napping from fear, you should take the approach when working with a spooking horse. A horse that spooks needs to be treated kindly. He shouldn't be forced into stepping over his "fear boundary". You have to talk to them, pet them, and be patient.

It just so happens that this is one of the easiest and most effective ways to solve the napping problem. The tradeoff is that it also takes the most time. But so what? Horse training is about patience.

So what do you do? Simply sit in the saddle. You'll want to give your horse enough rein to stretch his neck but don't give him so much that he can graze. Then you simply sit there until he decides to move forward. Don't let him go left or right. Don't let him back up or turn around and head home. Don't kick him. Don't yell at him.

You are telling your horse it's okay to stand still but he doesn't get to anything but stand there or move forward.

At some point the horse should move forward. When he does, give him plenty of reward.

The results from waiting for your horse to move forward are far better with patience and kindness than trying to force your horse to move. Sure, it may take a l-o-n-g time for him to move but he'll eventually

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feel safe enough to do it – or he may get bored just standing there – and you should know that boredom and feeling safe are almost the exact same thing in the horse's mind.

Next time you take your horse out and he naps it may take half the time for him to move. Then the next time it may only take a few minutes. It's kind of like the old rule of training. The more you work on it the lesser time it takes.

What do you do while you're patiently waiting for your horse to move? If you're with friends then warn them before hand this may happen. You may have to sit there and have a conversation. If you're by yourself bring a crossword puzzle or even a book. Do what it takes for you to pass the time and not get impatient.

Just remember to treat it like you would a horse that's spooking. Most of the time, napping is a reaction to spooking. You simply have to be patient and wait it out.

Andy Curry is a nationally known horse trainer and author of several best selling horse training and horse care books. For information visit his website at www.horsetrainingandtips.com. He is also the leading expert on Jesse Beery's horse training methods which can be seen at www.horsetrainingandtips.com/Jesse_Beerya.htm



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