



ReactorPanel THE RESPONSIVE SADDLE

HOW DO I KNOW IF MY SADDLE FITS?

We encounter and solve equine behavior issues every day that are saddle-related, often surprising horse owners who previously believed that their horses had personality or training issues. However, before deciding that your saddle is the culprit, you need to be confident that your horse is correctly trimmed or shod, does not need body work, is bitted/bridled appropriately, and has been properly trained. You should also honestly evaluate yourself—your own body symmetry and riding ability—and seek professional help if you think it's called for.

We strongly recommend testing your saddle with tools like the Impression Pad, which are designed to give you data about what is occurring under the saddle while you ride. In addition, there are a number of signs that a saddle fits well:

- The front of the tree matches the angle of the horse's shoulder
- The panels are as large as possible
- There is even contact under the entire panel area
- The saddle tree matches the horse's top line, whether straight, convex, or concave
- The gullet of the saddle provides clearance for the spine and spinous processes through its entire length
- The twist of the tree is the proper width to accommodate the base of the wither
- The stirrup bar is not set in so far that it presses on the horse
- The saddle allows complete freedom of the shoulder
- The saddle accommodates any asymmetries in the horse
- If the horse is atrophied, the saddle fits around the atrophy so that it can heal, not worsen
- The girthing system is adjustable, so that the girth falls into the horse's natural girth groove

The ReactorPanel system completely and competently addresses each of these fitting issues:

- Are the points of the tree parallel to the horse's shoulder?
- Are the panels as large as possible?
- Is there even contact under the panels through the entire back?
- Does the gullet provide proper clearance for the spine, spinous processes, and wither through its entire length?
- Is the twist of the tree constructed properly to accommodate the base of the wither?
- Does the saddle permit complete freedom of movement in the shoulder?
- If your horse is atrophied, does your saddle fit around (not into) the damaged area so that it can heal?
- Is your horse quiet and calm when you approach with the saddle?
- Does your horse stand still while you tighten the girth?
- Is the girthing system adjustable to allow you to place the girth in your horse's natural girth groove?
- Does your horse move freely forward when you travel downhill?
- Are you balanced and comfortable in the saddle front-to-back and side-to-side?
- Is your horse pain-free? If you don't know how to check for pain, a competent professional can check—and teach you simple tests to do yourself.

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