

Using the Saddle Gauge

What you'll need: a helper. Their job is to keep your horse on flat level ground, four feet on the floor, and it's head facing straight forward not turned. No cocked rear legs, no eating hay off the ground, head as close to travel position as possible. Using a pen please then fill out the form.

You'll need a roll of masking tape, 1" wide.

Take the Saddle Gauge out of the box. It will be folded flat so you'll need to open up the paddles. Be sure that you notice that the front is where the logo is, and the logo should be readable and upright. Fool around a few minutes to see how it bends. The spine has a joint in each middle, and each paddle moves as well. The spine has numbers and a pointer that you will record on your paperwork. The paddles are different: they too have numbers 1, ½, 2 and so on. The pointer is the corner of the brown square. You'll record those numbers as well. Please do not loosen the hardware, it's supposed to be tight so that you can lift it on and off numerous times without it sagging and changing.

The goal: to get the bottom narrow edge of each paddle to touch along the edge on the animals back. Note in the photo that the spine of the gauge is not exactly following the topline of the animal, that's because to get the paddles to lay down sometimes you'll need to change the spine shape. Don't try to move the paddles or spine on the animal, rather take it off and move whatever part. Then place it back on. Your two sides may be quite different right to left, not to worry many equines are asymmetric. It's important that each time you take it on and off that the spine of the gauge be right over the spine of the animal as well as on the same tape marker in front.

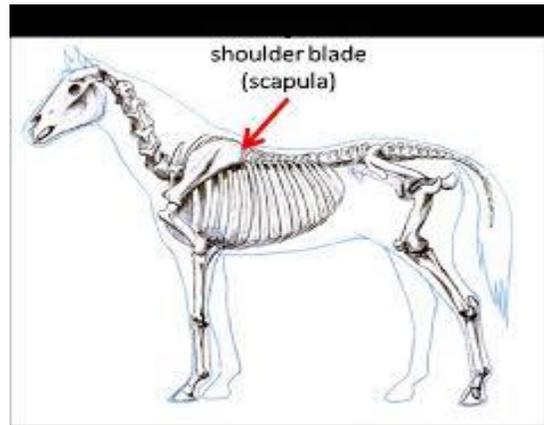




IF YOU ARE GOING TO BUILD A SADDLE ON A SPECIFIC TREE THEN FOLLOW THESE DIRECTIONS:

Step 1) Find the scapula of your horse. If you have a heavy muscled horse, your helper can lift the front hoof to expose the round backside of the scapula. After the hoof is back on the ground, place a short piece of tape the round edge of the scapula. It's actually straight up from the "armpit". You can feel it with your flat hand. Do the same tape piece to the other side directly across from the left side. This is paddle #1 location, the most forward front paddle that has the logo on it.

For a western or endurance treed saddle: after finding the back round side of the shoulder/scapula, with tape mark two fingers (toward the front) with tape, in other words on the shoulder. Although saddles don't actually sit this far forward we do need to see how large the shoulder area is so the tree allows it to slide underneath. The first piece of tape is where the front paddle should be put each and every time you remove and place it back on the animal. Also note the spine of the gauge is right straight down the center of the back each and every time you place it on the animal.



For an English or flocked underside saddle: mark with tape three fingers behind the scapula as this is where this type of saddle sits.

Step 2) Start at the front, pressing the right and left paddles against the body. It helps to have a helper look to make sure the paddles are on the animal not standing off. You may need to change the spine to achieve this. Do both sides checking for it being centered, and on the first piece of tape.

Step 3) Then move paddle #2, paddle #3 and so on, taking it off and on each time you need to change something checking to be sure you place it back on the front most piece of tape, and that it's centered over the spine each time.

Step 4) Write down the spine numbers in pencil and the right and left paddle numbers too. Then do it again to make sure you did it correctly.

then:

Step 4) add your saddle pad that you plan to use and place the gauge on the pad in exactly the same location. If there are huge differences in how the paddles lay on the animal with the pad then readjust the gauge so that the gauge follows the shape of the pad.

Step 5) write down the new set of numbers circled on the form, that way there will be both sets of numbers. Some pads will really change the fit due to their thickness and if the contoured topline lifts the gauge off the body. Please print and use the form on the next page to record your Saddle Gauge numbers.

Step 6) taking videos: please email (not text, it's too small to see) a video of your horse being led in a straight line while the person videoing is standing still. Pass starting from the right to the left, turn around, pass again. Walk, trot or gait.

Step 7) if possible include a video of the horse ridden walk, trot or gait

Step 8) photos: have your helper hold the horse straight, four feet on the floor, head in natural moving posture. I will need the following photos:

A: from the side, the entire horse from head to toe

B) from over top (on a step up at the horses' rump or standing above) this one is especially important to have the horse straight, I need the head to toe shot from above looking straight down on the back

C) standing at the neck, aim the camera toward the tail so I can see the topography of the back

D) Photos of the Gauge on the horse before you put it in the box. A close up, and from the side the entire horse

IF YOU ARE TESTING OUT AN EXISTING SADDLE or SHOPPING FOR A SADDLE:

Place the Saddle Gauge on the horses back as described in #1 if you are testing a treed saddle. If you are testing an English saddle, then place the Gauge three fingers to the rear of the scapula. Record your numbers just in case it gets bumped and changed. Now you can bring your gauge to the saddle shop and place it on the underside of the saddle turned upside down. Gently place the gauge front paddle where the front concho is on a treed saddle, and if it's an English saddle the front edge of the saddle is the first paddle. Check that the gauge is centered as well. What you are looking for is the same thing: the paddles to lie flat against the inside of the saddle tree. If there are voids where the paddles are not touching, or only touching in places, or it's so narrow that it wants to move the paddles, then you'll know it's too narrow for your horse.

You can do the opposite by placing the Saddle Gauge inside the saddle turned upside down, and then placing the Saddle Gauge up on the animal. Again, placing the Gauge in it's appropriate location depending on the saddle type, the paddles should lay down against the body of the horse. Also check fit with the saddle pad. You may find the fit is okay until you add the pad and suddenly it's too narrow up front. You can try a thinner pad in that case.

NOTE: Ultimately consult with a professional saddle fitter to confirm your findings and do not rely on sweat or dry marks as a read for fit. In addition to using the Saddle Gauge, you'll still need to sit the saddle on the horse with a pad to determine if there is clearance over the wither under the gullet, if it's too long, rubbing on the back end, up too high in front (indicates too narrow) or too low in front (indicates too wide) both bare and ridden. The horse may be asymmetrical therefore it may fit on one side but not the other side. Some of these issues can be corrected. Consult a professional fitter who understands the entire subject of saddle fit.

