How to Fit a Saddle

(USPC D Manual p. 278 & 294)

Name: _______ Teacher Copy ___________________ Date: __________________________

➢ Having a saddle available for visuals is good.

1) The Saddle must fit pony’s back without pinching, rocking, or pressing on the pony’s spine.

2) While the saddle sits on the horse’s back, without a saddle pad, you should NOT be able to see any open space under the saddle along the pony’s back. True or False

➢ Point this out on the actual saddle - put it on someone’s back, they will be able to see plenty of 'open space”.

3) How to find the tree point:

4) The front of saddle must be wide enough to fit his saddle muscles comfortably.

5) When sitting in the saddle you must be able to fit at least ______ fingers between the saddle head and pony’s spine.

6) If you can’t fit at least 2 adult fingers, the saddle is too ______ wide______.
7) If a saddle is too wide it will sit on the pony's **withers**, causing soreness.

8) As a temporary solution, a **back protector pad** can be used to raise the saddle and protect his back.

9) If you can fit 3 or more fingers, the saddle is too **narrow**.

10) If the saddle is too narrow it will press down on the pony's **back muscles**.

11) Is there a temporary solution for too-narrow saddle? **no**

12) The three signs of an ill fitting saddle are:
   1) **Hot spots** - dry spots under the saddle surrounded by sweat
   2) **Swelling**
   3) **patches of white hair** - these are the result of blisters formed from the pressure of the tack

13) What is "bridging" and why is it bad? **When the rider is sitting, his weight is on the front and back and not in the middle. Bad because too much weight on withers and mid back - weight not distributed correctly.**

14) What is "rocking" and why is it bad? **All the riders weight is in the middle and not distributed evenly.**
Fitting the Saddle to the Rider

The saddle must fit both the HORSE and the RIDER.

The size of the saddle is measured from the STUD on side of the Pommel to the center of the CANTLE.

Typical saddle sizes run from 14" to 18".

To check for proper saddle/rider fit:
1) sit in the middle/deepest part of the seat.
2) with feet out of stirrups and leg relaxed, adjust stirrups leathers so stirrup irons hang evenly and touch the bottom of ankle bone.
3) put feet in stirrups, sit in good riding position

> THERE SHOULD BE ROOM FOR **ONE** HAND BEHIND YOU ON THE CANTLE.
> LEGS SHOULD FALL INTO HOLLOW OF FLAP, BEHIND KNEE ROLL
> STIRRUP LEATHERS SHOULD HANG VERTICALLY

What to know for USPC Ratings: C1 - Identify tack on own mount and **discuss fit**