

HOW TO CLEAN YOUR SADDLE

The BALANCE Robin, Wren and Bug saddles are made from high quality leathers. As with any natural material, it is important that you keep it clean in the proper way to make sure your saddle lasts a long time.



To take good care of your saddle, we recommend that you simply wipe it over with a damp cloth to remove dirt and mud on a regular basis. In addition to this, you should use a good quality leather dressing to condition the leather and keep it supple when needed. It is important to only use products that contain natural ingredients. See the full Saddling Manual for more information about cleaning and conditioning.

If your saddle gets wet, allow it to dry naturally at room temperature and then feed with a saddle cream/conditioner as necessary.

Suitable products to use on the leather parts of the saddle to keep them supple are:

- **Sedgwicks Leathercare**
- **Fiebing's Aussie Leather Conditioner.**
- **Effol Effax Leather Balsam (Lederbalsam)**

If you live in a very hot or very cold and dry climate you will need to condition your saddle more often. Dry leather will wear faster and will also lose its colour faster than clean and conditioned leather.

Please note. *that some leathers have a thin protective surface coating that includes some colour. As this coating wears away (often first seen under the stirrups) it will show the full colour of the natural tanned leather, which may be slightly different in tone. Over time, as the saddle gets used and cleaned, the coating tends to wear off generally, leaving a more even tone over the whole flap.*

Don't Forget.....to check on the BALANCE website from time to time for more tips and information about how to get the best from your BALANCE saddle and other equipment.



BALANCE SADDLING SYSTEM MANUAL FOR PONY SADDLE USERS

July 2020



www.BALANCEinternational.com

Congratulations!

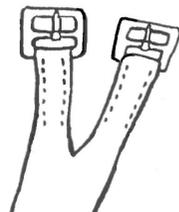
This saddle has been designed and made very carefully to help you to keep your horse/pony happy and comfortable when you ride. It has also been designed to help you be a good rider because, when it is 'fitted' correctly, it will make it easy for you to ride with good balance. A well balanced rider can ride with good hands and give clear and accurate requests (aids) to their horse or pony.

To make sure that your saddle is helping you and your horse/pony as well as possible, you may need to get some help from your parents/guardian or your instructor, so as well as this booklet we have provided you with a copy of the Full Saddling Manual on CD. Please ask whoever is going to help you with your saddle to read through it as well.

YOU WILL NEED.....

- The pads you were advised to use with your BALANCE saddle.
- Some safety stirrup irons.
- A girth that splits into two before the buckles like the one in this diagram.

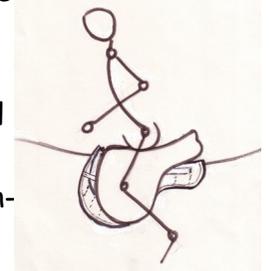
With most horses/ponies, you will fasten your girth to the first girth strap/billet (closest to the ponies nose) and the third one (closest to his tail).



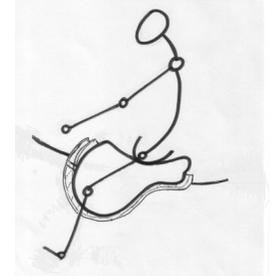
IF YOU WERE ADVISED TO DO SOME REMEDIAL WORK WHEN YOU TRIED THE SADDLE, PLEASE FOLLOW THE ADVICE THAT THE BALANCE CONSULTANT OR TEST RIDE FACILITATOR GAVE YOU.

Get into the habit of checking the balance of the saddle as soon as you get off after a ride. If the saddle looks level (as shown on page 5), you do not need to change the pads.

If the saddle looks tipped forward, it will make you feel unbalanced and will not be comfortable for your pony. Add more thickness under the front until the saddle looks balanced.



If the saddle looks tipped back, it will make you feel unbalanced and will not be comfortable for your pony. Either take a pad out from under the front or use a thinner pad until the saddle looks level*.



PLEASE NOTE that if the saddle looks as if it is tipping back when you only have either the 1/4 inch JB pad underneath, it may be that the saddle is no longer wide enough for your pony and you need to get some help to check this.

If you are worried that your saddle is not sitting in the way it should, or if you think your pony is not comfortable, please stop using the saddle and get help from someone who knows about BALANCE saddles or get in touch with us at the BALANCE office so that we can help you.

Bedding in your new saddle. Important!

The stuffing (flocking) in the saddle panels (cushions) is all fluffed up when it is new and the wool will squash down and the panels will get a bit thinner during the first few rides. This is perfectly normal. The flocking needs to squash down evenly, so this is an important time with your saddle.

For the first hour that you use your new saddle, ride only in walk and ask your helper to feel underneath the front of the saddle a couple of times during your ride to make sure that the underneath is not pressed into your ponies withers. When your helper is feeling for this, make sure you are sitting properly in the middle of the saddle and not leaning forward or back.

You must also check your girth at the same time because it will get looser as the panels and the pads squash down. When the saddle is correctly balanced for you and your pony it will be easy to keep your feet underneath you.

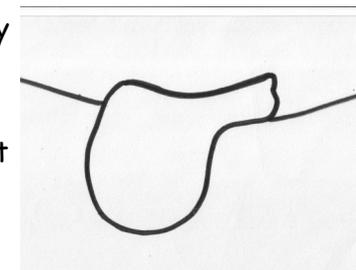
During the second and third hour you can do short amounts of rising trot and it is when you are doing the rising trot that you and your helper will be able to feel/see if the saddle is tipping you forward or back.

As the flocking is settling the panels will get thinner so you will need to check that the pads you are using are still the right ones to keep the underside of the tree off the ponies back-bone and keep the seat of the saddle level for you to ride on. Add or Adjust the pads if necessary.

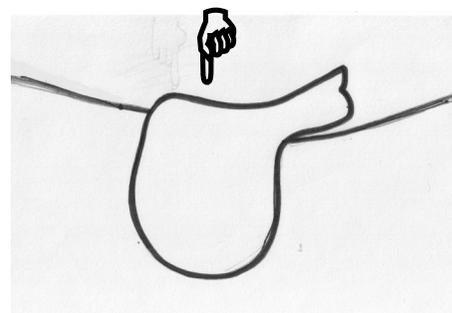
TO HELP YOUR HORSE or PONY BE COMFORTABLE YOU NEED TO KNOW HOW TO PUT THE SADDLE ON PROPERLY WITH THE CORRECT PADS UNDERNEATH.

It is likely that you will already have some notes from a **BALANCE Saddle Consultant** or a **BALANCE Test Ride Facilitator** that explains which pads you used when you tried some saddles. However, your new saddle has new flocking and is likely to need different pads when you first use it to go through the 'breaking in' process. So, we recommend that you go through the following routine. (It is also important to do this before you ride in the saddle if you haven't ridden your pony for a few weeks, in case he has got thinner or fatter during that time!)

1. Ask someone to hold your pony for you while you do this. Take your saddle and put it on your pony in the correct place and girth it up, but without any pads underneath and have a good look at how it is sitting. It may look like this at first.....



However, when you, push down on the pommel it should lift up at the back and tip down a bit at the front, but not so much that the underside of the pommel touches the ponies withers. Feel under the front to check this.

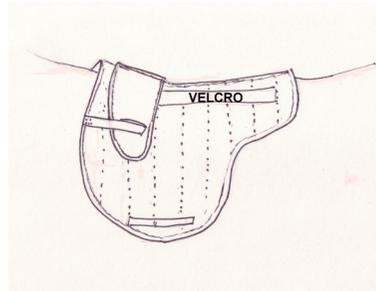


If it touches the withers, ask your parents to contact the person they bought the saddle from before you use it. It is very important that the saddle does not press down onto the bony parts of your ponies back.

If it does tip down a bit at the front but doesn't touch his withers, you can go to the next step of putting on the pads. If your pony has good muscles along his back you will probably only need the simplest pad set which is the wool fleece pad and a JB pad, so these are the pads to try first.

2. Put on the wool fleece pad (numnah) and a JB pad in the way it shows in the picture here....

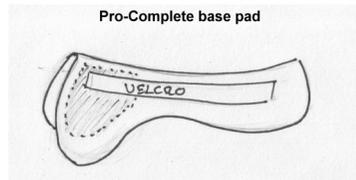
3. Now put your saddle back on top of the pads and make sure that you pull them up into the gap between the panels (the gullet/channel) at the front and back of the saddle. Do up the Velcro® straps and girth the saddle up.



Try pushing down on the front again and check to see that it does not tip down at the front or lift off at the back. If it does not tip, it is ready to ride in and you can go to Step number 4 on Page 5.

However, if the saddle has been fitted to leave extra room for your pony's muscles to get bigger and stronger, you will need to use extra pads under your saddle for a while and these should be in your package.

Sometimes this will mean you just have to use the thicker JB pad on top of the wool fleece pad, but some ponies need more help than this and then you will need to use what is called the Pro-Complete Base Pad. This will give him some more cushioning and protection until his back muscles get strong again.



If your pony needs the Base Pad, put the wool pad on as usual and then the Base Pad on top making sure the Velcro® is on the top. It will look like this.....

Then put the saddle on top, do all the straps up (including girth straps/billets) and see if it tips up/down. If it does not tip you are ready to ride.

If the saddle still tips forward add the ¼" JB pad and check again by pushing on the pommel. If it still rocks forward when you push on the pommel, put the ½" JB pad on instead.

When the padding is right the saddle should look level in the seat like this and feel nice and steady on the pony's back when girthed up.

4. You are now ready to ride in your new saddle. However, there are some important things to remember when you start riding in your new comfy saddle.

You need to be able to spring into the saddle without a struggle, or better still use a safe mounting block and/or ask someone to hold the off-side stirrup when you get on to make sure you don't pull the saddle to the side as you mount— especially on very round ponies!

When you sit in the saddle, it should be easy to sit in the middle and keep your balance like this with your feet underneath you.....

