

Placing a Saddle on a Horse



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- Each booklet illustrates one way to perform a skill and it is acknowledged that there are often other approaches. Before using the booklets students should check with their university or college whether the approach illustrated is acceptable in their context or whether an alternative method should be used.
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Equipment for this station:

- Model horse
- Saddle
- Headcollar
- Tie up post (with a piece of string attached)

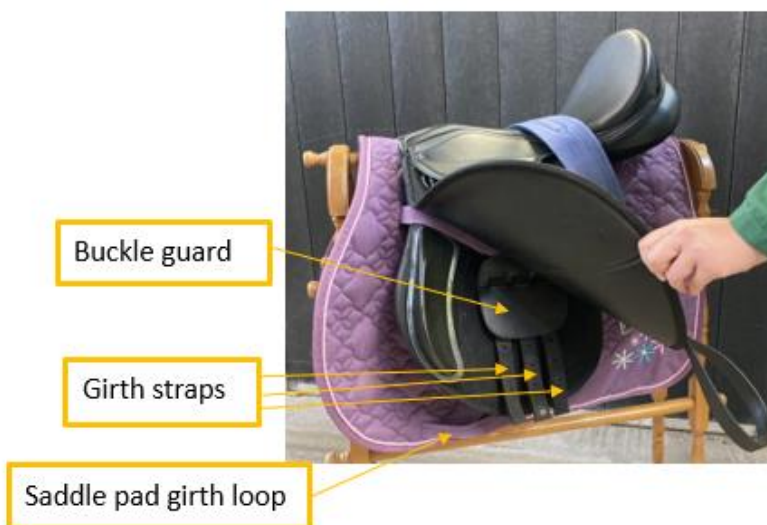
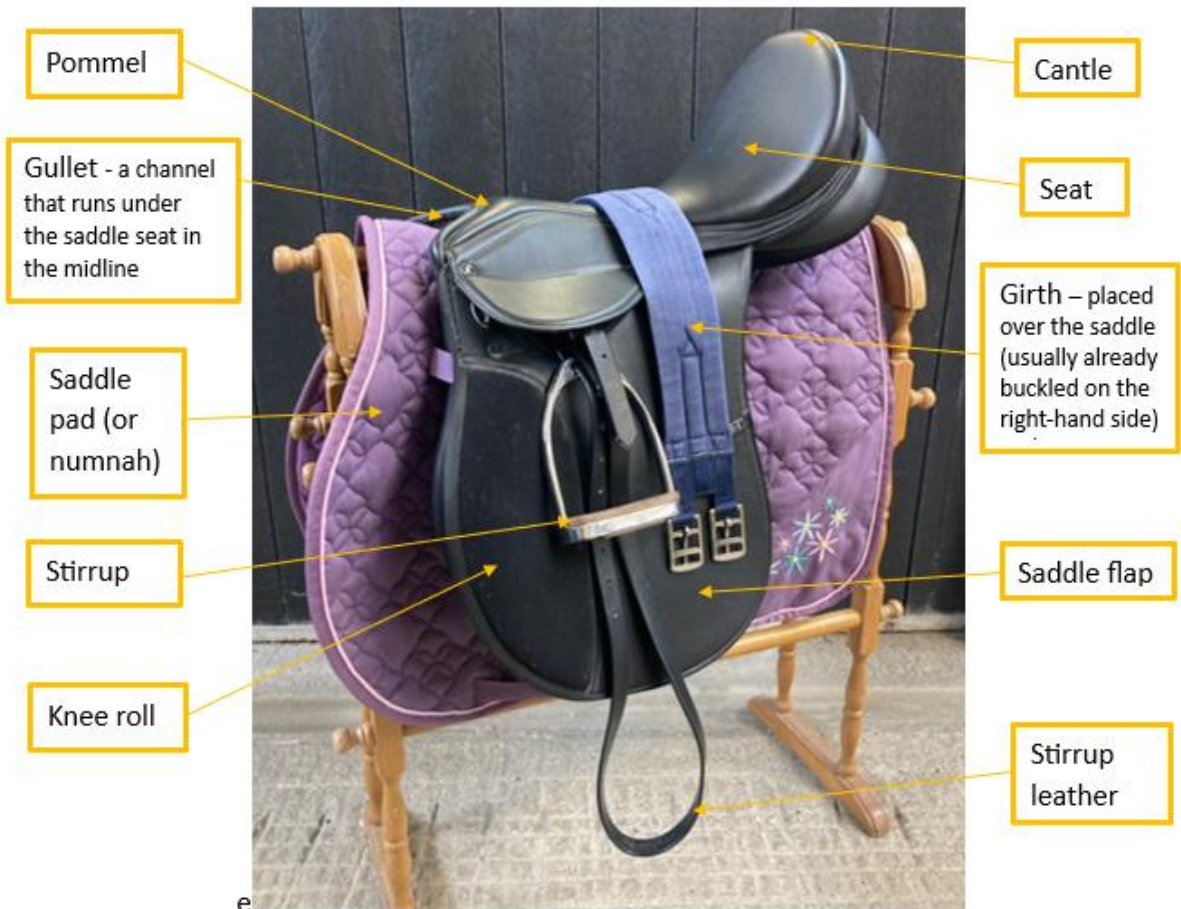
Considerations for this station:

- Refer to videos on Blackboard for a demonstration of how to place a saddle on a horse.
- Personal protective equipment (PPE) must be worn when working with horses, including safety boots and a hard hat.
- Tacking up a horse involves placing the bridle and the saddle. For the bridle refer to booklet: 'CSL_H06 Placing a Bridle on a Horse'.

Anyone working in the Clinical Skills Lab must read the 'CSL_I01 Induction' and agree to abide by the 'CSL_I00 House Rules' & 'CSL_I02 Lab Area Rules'

Please inform a member of staff if equipment is damaged or about to run out.

Points of the Saddle



Clinical Skills: Placing a Saddle



1 Place a headcollar on the horse and tie the lead rope to the string on the tie ring using a quick release knot.

If the horse already has a bridle on, the headcollar is placed over the bridle.

Refer to the booklet 'Placing a Headcollar CSL_H03' for guidance.



2 Check the saddle has a saddle pad (numnah) and girth.

Hold the saddle with the front (pommel) resting on your left arm and the back (cantle) held in your right hand. Ensure the central seam of the saddle pad is positioned in the gullet of the saddle.



3 Approach the horse on its left (near) side.

Lift the saddle up over the horse's back just in front of (cranial to) the withers and move it down and back into position.

The saddle should sit just behind the horse's shoulder, over the withers and no further back than its last rib (not visible on the model)



4 Check that the saddle pad is lying flat against the horse's back and not pressing on the withers and does not have any creases that could cause pressure points.



5 Safely move to the right (off) side of the horse.

Do not walk under the horse's neck or behind the horse when changing sides. Check that the saddle pad is lying flat against the horse's back (without any creases).

Gently lower the girth so it is hanging down. *Note: The girth should already be attached to the girth straps.*



6 Safely move back to the left (near) side of the horse.

Reach under the belly to grasp the girth and bring it up to secure on the girth straps.

Clinical Skills: Placing a Saddle



7
Pass the girth through the saddle pad girth loop and fasten the girth using the 1st and 3rd girth straps.

Note: There are 3 girth straps. There is a spare strap in case one breaks.



8
Pull the buckle guard down over the buckles to prevent damage to the saddle flap.



9
Check the fit and position of the saddle. Two to three fingers should fit between the horse's withers and the pommel.

See step 3 (on previous page) to re-check the correct positioning.



10
To remove the saddle, unfasten the girth on the left (near) side of the saddle. Gently lower the girth down so it is hanging from the right (off) side.



11
Hold the front of the saddle and the saddle pad in your left hand and the back of the saddle and pad in your right hand. Lift the saddle and pad up and back bringing it towards your body.



12
As you bring the saddle towards you rest it on your left arm and use your right hand to catch the girth as it comes over the horse's back and lie it over the top of the saddle.

Place the saddle on the rack outside the stable.



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Resetting the station: Placing a Saddle

1. Leave the saddle on the rack for the next user.
2. Place the numnah on the rack under the saddle.
3. Place the girth over the saddle, do not leave it dangling down and on the floor.

Station ready for the next person:



Please inform a member of staff if equipment is damaged or about to run out.

I wish I'd known: Placing a Saddle

- Many horses are used to having a saddle fitted and will stand still whilst you place it. However, some may not be happy about it and fidget, 'pull a face' or even try to bite making it harder to put the saddle on. In these cases, remain calm and be patient – ensure the horse is aware of what you are doing and try to provide reassurance. It may also help to tie the lead rope a bit shorter.
- Always be careful around horses – some may kick, bite or barge past you. Always be aware of where you are standing in relation to the horse and stable door and be careful not to startle the horse.
- Approach a horse from the horse's left (near) side; this is an equine convention and therefore horses are used to such an approach.
- When moving around the horse, do not walk under the horse's neck when changing sides.
- Never walk behind a horse – this is dangerous.
- If tying up a horse use a quick release knot (see 'CSL_F00 Putting on a Halter' for illustrations and instructions about tying a quick release knot). Also avoid tying to a fixed point e.g. a metal ring, in case the horse pulls backwards suddenly (e.g. if startled); instead, tie to something that would break under pressure (e.g. a piece of string through the ring) or use one of the commercially available products that has a quick release mechanism.