

TIDY WITH YOUR TACK

Good quality tack and equipment benefits both horse and rider. From keeping you safe and comfortable to enhancing training and riding, your equipment is an important part of working with your horse.

No matter the gear, it's important to keep it in good working order. The first step to ensuring your tack is always ready to use is proper storing techniques. Cow horse and versatility trainer Mike Major offers six tips to keep things organized and functioning efficiently.



1. ALWAYS HANG BRIDLES PROPERLY.

Major says he's a stickler for hanging bridle reins correctly with his headstalls. Make sure there's a loop in the rein at the bottom where each rein attaches to the bit, then up and over the crown of the headstall and down the opposite side. Reins that are stored twisted and knotted will develop a bend in the leather, regardless of quality.

"With crimps and bends in your bridle reins, you don't have the feel of your horse, and your horse can't feel your cues as well," Major says.

2. PROTECT SADDLE BLANKETS.

Store your saddle blankets in a protected area or in saddle pad bags, particularly if they're show pads. Major doesn't personally store his everyday blankets in bags, but he keeps them hung up and away from dust.

3. KEEP SADDLES ON SADDLE RACKS.

Major says to avoid storing your saddle on the ground, which can bend the leather out of shape and encourage mold due to moisture absorption. Instead, he says to keep saddles on saddle racks. Also, if your saddle is placed crooked on the saddle rack, or you store it incorrectly, it could warp and damage its rawhide-covered saddle tree.

"Your saddle might have been a really good saddle, and if you don't put it on a rack, the tree could contract and start hurting your horse's back," Major says. "Make sure your saddle rack is straight and your saddle is straight on it."

You might also consider storing your saddle with a saddle

cover, although that's not always necessary for a work saddle, says Major.

4. SECURE CINCHES.

Make sure to tie up your cinch to your saddle when not in use, says Major. This prevents it from dragging on the ground and picking up dirt and other debris.

"I've seen cinches get caught in cactus on the ground, and if you don't know it, it can get on your horse and hurt him when you next tack up," Major says. "Everything needs to be picked up so it doesn't touch the ground accidentally."

5. PROTECT LEATHER GOODS.

Humidity can cause leather products to mold if they're not hung up after use, says Major. He regularly oils his bridles to keep them in good condition.

"Don't leave your bridles lying around," Major says. "It's good to have them hung up, and then I'll spray them with some neatsfoot oil to keep the mold off of them."

6. ORGANIZE GROOMING SUPPLIES.

Major keeps a set of grooming supplies in his trailer for shows and another set at the barn at home, in tubs near the saddling area. At home, he keeps brushes separate from curry combs, and brushes are separated into stiff and soft bristles.

"I like my grooming gear to be organized to where when I reach in and grab for something, I know exactly where it's located," Major says. "That way I don't have to dig through a bunch of tubs to find the correct brush."

SADDLE PADS

The Rancher Saddle Pad with Flex Fit by 5 Star Equine Products & Supplies

This pad is specially engineered for ropers, ranchers and long trail rides. Its 1½-inch thick wool eliminates the need for double padding and reduces cinching. It is available with Flex Fit, which features a cut-back in the gullet area on the front of the pad. This eliminates pressure on the withers and allows your horse to move freely, which can reduce soreness. The pad is made in the United States and is available in four sizes and natural and black color options. Price starts at \$389.95. Get more information at 5starequineproducts.com, or call 870-389-6328.



Blanket Top Performance Felt Pad from Cashel



This versatile pad is ideal for the trail or arena. Made of ¾-inch pressed felt with a Merino fleece bottom and a blanket wool top, it's finished with distressed leather wear leathers. Choose from gray, chocolate, tan, olive, purple or turquoise on this 34-by-36-inch pad. Price is \$119.99. Find at a Cashel dealer near you or at cashelcompany.com.

Flex Contour Performance Saddle Pad from Synergy by Weaver



Made in the United States and backed by a "no-risk 90-test-ride guarantee," this saddle pad features a flexible contoured spine design that follows the curve of

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TACK

Hackamore Outfits from Buckaroo Businesses

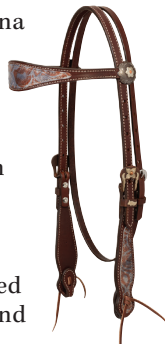
Buckaroo Businesses offers the largest selection of quality hackamores in the country, with a huge variety of bosals, hangers, mecates and other accessories. The store, located in Billings, Montana, carries a vast array of hand-braided bosals from 8-plait to



60-plait or hitched horsehair; mecates including mohair, horse mane hair and several synthetic options; and hangers in leather, rawhide and hitched horsehair. Visit the showroom at 221 North 15th Street in Billings, order from buckaroo-businesses.com or call 406-252-5000.

Patina Rose Collection by Weaver Leather

Weaver Leather's Patina Rose Collection features tack handcrafted from rich brown bridle leather, accented with embossed leather overlays with vibrant hues of blue and rust. The gear is handcrafted in the United States and includes Weaver Leather's exclusive brown iron floral buckles and loops accented with German silver trim. Conchos complement the hardware for a finishing touch. The collection consists of a browband headstall,



sliding ear headstall, scalloped breast collar, pulling breast collar and spur straps. Purchase through a Weaver Leather retailer or at ridethebrand.com.

Adjustable Reins by Double Diamond Halter Co.

This fully adjustable rein made from lightly waxed nylon lariat fiber is braided round and rolled flat, which prevents curling or twisting.

Available in white or black in 1-inch or ½-inch width, it adjusts from 4 to 8½ feet by sliding the rope through two D-rings on both sides. It attaches to the bit with a buckled strap for easy changes. A leather keeper on the rein keeps it connected when shortened. A horsehair tassel



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Latigo Slide Ear Headstall from Dennis Moreland Tack

Dennis

Moreland Tack's Latigo Slide Ear

Headstall is meticulously handmade of doubled and stitched latigo

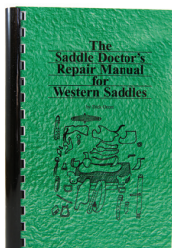
leather with stainless steel buckles and eye-catching braided rawhide keepers. The short cheekpieces are designed to keep the buckles away from the horse's eyes. Doubled and stitched leather holds up longer than single-ply leather but is not thicker than single ply. It's available with slot conchos, screw conchos or tie strings. Price: is \$99.99 from dmtack.com or call 817-312-5305.



LEATHERWORKING TOOLS

Saddle Doctor's Repair Manual for Western Saddles

Experienced saddlemaker Dick Orent originally wrote this book as a textbook for classes he taught. Written for readers ages 8 to 80 years old, the book addresses everything from deconstructing a saddle down to the tree, to performing minor repairs and reassembling the saddle. Using this guide, you can repair your own saddles and tack. Cost: \$19.99 plus shipping: \$4.50 U.S., \$6.00 Canada and \$8.50 other countries. To contact Orent, email saddle.doc@wildblue.net or write Saddle Doctor, P.O. Box 281, Uehling, Nebraska 68063.



Boss Sewing Machine by Tippmann Industrial

This hand-powered machine can be mounted to any table without needing an electrical hookup, yet it can stitch through 3/4-inch of leather, as well as rubber, nylon



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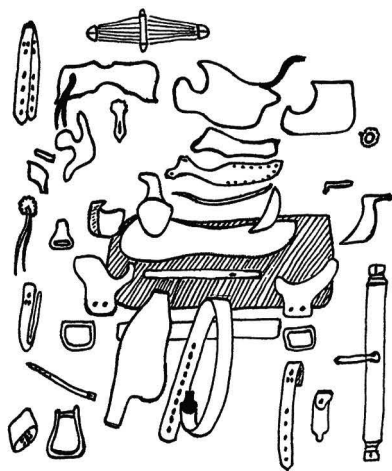
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The Saddle Doctor's Repair Manual for Western Saddles

by Dick Orent



Repair Your Own Saddle

This manual was written for the beginner and is an excellent way to get started in the field of saddle repair. **The Saddle Doctor's Manual** will show you how to take a saddle apart down to the tree, do most of the repairs, and rebuild it. Chapters discuss tools, materials, and all parts of a saddle and include many illustrations to help you. There are even blank pages at the end of each chapter for you to make your own notes. 161 pages.

Each book \$19.99 plus shipping and handling, \$4.50 U.S., \$6.00 Canada and \$8.50 for other countries. Payable in U.S. funds only. Allow 2 to 3 weeks for delivery. Nebraska residents add 6.5% sales tax (\$1.30). Sorry no CODs. Send check or money order to:

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webbing, cloth, tarp and sail material. It's ready to sew out of the box, the simple design is ideal for the beginner or expert, and it includes an owner's manual and instructional DVD, complete accessory pack as well as tech support. Retailing for \$1,495, it can be purchased at tippmanindustrial.com or by calling 866-286-8046.

SADDLES

Lady Wade and Trail Wade Saddles by McCall Saddle Co.

McCall Saddle Co.'s Lady Wade and Trail Wade saddles offer lightweight functionality, stylishness and quality. With myriad tooling patterns, silver and other customization options, your dream saddle is within your budget and your reality. All McCall saddles are handmade by trained craftsmen for quality results.



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This small company emphasizes customer service. Purchase through authorized retailers or the retail outlet, dryforksaddle.com.

John M Fallis Custom Saddles

Since 1985, John M Fallis Custom Saddles has been making the Balanced Saddle with a tree that has been rigorously tested on every type of horse. This saddle includes a seat designed to place the rider in the horse's true center of gravity. Bulkless rigging permits more leg contact. Forward-hung stirrups increase the rider's stability and balance, and stirrup flyback is minimized. Beginning saddle price is \$4,300. Purchase by calling John Fallis at 208-461-7252 or emailing johnfallis@fallisbalancedsaddles.com.



Jeff Feil Custom Saddles

All of Jeff Feil Custom Saddles are made one at a time, using top-quality materials. They include traditional features such as leather



ground seats, fully plugged skirts, real woolskin-lined skirts, all billets and back cinches fully lined, and more. These are a great value for the dollar for custom saddles, and Jeff Feil Custom Saddles offers a warranty on all products. handmadesaddles.com or 877-293-1433

ESSENTIAL GEAR

Fallon Taylor Sunflower Helmet from Troxel

Designed with and inspired by world champion barrel racer Fallon Taylor, this helmet fuses fashionable Western graphics with an ultralight low profile design. This



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high-performance helmet pairs large vents for superior ventilation with Troxel's DialFit comfort system that allows for quick and precise adjustment with one hand. The Fallon Taylor transforms your helmet from a piece of safety equipment to a fashion statement. Available in sizes XS-XL and seven graphic options. Price is \$99.99. Available at your local retailer and at troxelhelmets.com.

Nettles Leveler by Nettles Stirrups

Nettles Stirrups' patented Leveler helps you ride with less ankle, knee and hip pain.



The Leveler corrects a stirrup's angle, which is the result of twisted stirrup leathers. With your boot flat on the stirrup tread, your body aligns correctly in the saddle, improving balance and resulting in fewer dropped stirrups. The Leveler retails for \$95 per pair and is available only from Nettles Stirrups. Purchase at tack and Western stores, saddlemakers or through nettles-stirrups.com.

AirFlex Technology Cinch from Synergy by Weaver

The patented AirFlex Cinch offers breathability, comfort and performance thanks to a white cool-flex foam that will not absorb heat like traditional black neoprene. A unique airflow channel design helps prevent heat from being trapped and maximizes air circulation. Clean by simply hosing off after each ride. Padded flex edges move with your horse for extra cushioning and enhanced performance. Includes non-rust stainless steel hardware. Available in straight or roper style with flat or patented Roll Snug Smart Cinch buckle styles. Price is \$68.99. ridethebrand.com.



Shoofly Leggings by Stone Manufacturing and Supply

Shoofly Leggings prevent painful bites from biting flies, as well as the laying of bot fly eggs. They also reduce stomping, which can lead to hoof damage and leg

fatigue. Featuring plastic mesh with sewn-in stays, Shoofly Leggings



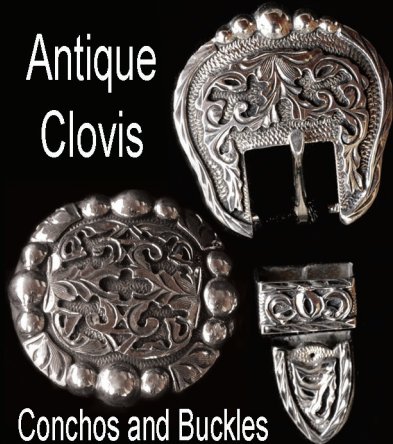
have heavy-duty Velcro closures, and new web-belt material on the bottom for stronger durability. The loose-fitting, chemical-free mesh allows air to circulate, making it ideal to cover wounds. Available in three colors and six sizes from stonemfg.net or from a local retailer.

Hansen Silver from Hansen Western Gear

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saddle and bridle trim in sizes from ½ inch to 3 inches. Hansen also carries scarf slide conchos and conchos for chinks and chaps. You'll find buckle sets in sizes from ½ inch to 1½ inches and quality hatband buckles for your nice hat. Find a retailer near you at hansensilver.com.

Canvas Trail Bag with Leather Accents from Tough1

Tough1's canvas trail bag features rugged cotton canvas reinforced with strong leather and an easy-to-clean synthetic backing along the entire underside of the bag. Each side features a large pocket with gussets, two small pockets with gussets and adjustable leather buckles. Strong hardware and water-resistant finish add to the bag's durability, while D-rings and saddle strings make attaching this bag to any saddle a breeze. Price is



\$96.98. Available in black, brown and sage from your local tack store, online retailer or jtidist.com/canvas-trail-bag-leather-accents.html.

Back Country Chest Holster from K Bar J Leather Company

This easy-to-access chest holster keeps your firearm close, whether you are horseback, on an ATV or hiking in the backcountry. The holster is American-made, comes with a mag or cartridge holder and is customized to fit most revolver and semi-auto sizes. The leather chest holster is adjustable to fit a wide range of sizes and features a quick-change system to swap out holsters in 30 seconds. Shoulder holsters and suspender rigs are also available for smaller concealed firearms. kbarjleather.com ■



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