



HOBSON'S CHOICE SADDLERY

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How to Make a Saddle Fit Tracing

Things You Will Need:

- Camera and film.
- Artist's flexible curve (available at most art or business supply stores), heavy gauge solder wire (available at any hardware store) or any other flexible wire with enough body to hold its shape. Wire or curve should be approximately 24" long. **Note:** a coat hanger is NOT suitable because it is not sufficiently malleable to conform correctly to the shape of the horse's back.
- Large sheet of plain paper (an opened up grocery bag works well).
- Heavy black felt tip marker.

Directions:

- Begin by taking a series of photographs of your horse, first without tack. First take a side view which shows the entire horse (similar to Figure 1.). Next, take a side view close-up of the area where the saddle goes and then another close up of the saddle area taken at about a 45 degree angle to the shoulder (Figure 2.). Lastly, take at least one shot from above looking down on his back (stand on a fence or the bed of a pickup truck. Your horse will love it – he'll be convinced you're a puma about to spring and will refuse to stand still. This will put you in good spirits for the rest of this project).
- Next, duplicate the first 3 photos with the saddle on (without a pad). If you're having the saddle modified, this will assist the saddler in determining not only how much to change the width, but where and how the flocking should be altered. If you're replacing a saddle that doesn't fit well, these photos are still valuable in helping to determine what saddle or tree size will best fit the horse.
- When you've finished the basic photo session, ungirth the saddle but leave it on the horse's back, being certain that it is situated in the correct position. Next, put your finger in front of the saddle (touching it) at a spot approximately 4" down from the top of the withers (see * in Figure 1). Now, push the saddle back out of your way and move your finger back toward the horse's tail *one inch* – this is the spot to make your tracing.
- Lay your wire or artist's curve over the horse's back so that the ends hang vertically down on either side and press, so that it will conform to the shape of the back. *Carefully* lift the curve or wire off the horse's back, being certain that it doesn't change its shape as you do so, and place it on the paper. Trace the *inside* of the wire or curve with the felt pen. Your finished tracing should resemble one of the two illustrations in Figure 3.

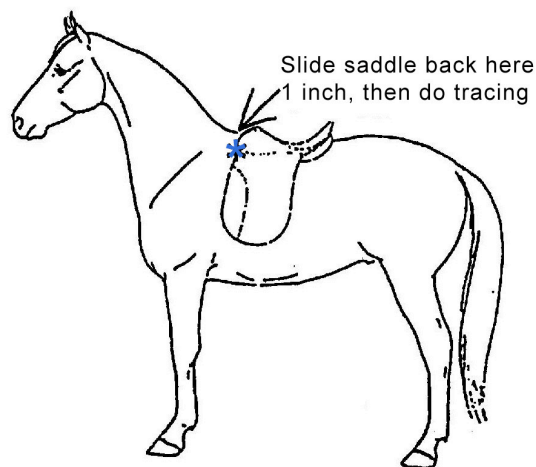


Figure 1.

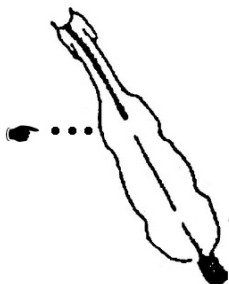


Figure 2.

- Label all your photographs and be sure to include a self-addressed envelope if you'd like them returned to you. Provide as much information as possible about the saddle you currently own, i.e. seat size, tree width, how old, etc. Include your name and telephone number so we can contact you.

Examples of withers tracing.



Figure 3.