SADDLE FIT: DUST PATTERNS AND SWEAT MARKS

By Jochen Schleese, CMS, CSFT, CSE - ©2015 Saddlefit 4 Life® All Rights Reserved.

With today’s technology (computerized saddle pads, fibreoptic cameras injected into the horse’s muscle under the saddle) during riding, x-rays of spine from the bottom through the horse’s rectum) we have a much better picture of fact - not theories based on opinions. Saddle fit is now truly a mixture of art and science.

With today’s technology (computerized saddle pads, fibreoptic cameras injected into the horse’s muscle under the saddle) during riding, x-rays of spine from the bottom through the horse’s rectum) we have a much better picture of fact - not theories based on opinions. Saddle fit is now truly a mixture of art and science.

There is pretty uniform moisture to clearly show the imprint of the saddle.

The horse's back actually has only a few sweat glands, most of them are found along his sides, at the neck or flank – areas that are thinner and open surface to allow the natural influence of air and wind to cool the body with the help of sweat. (This is why the large saddle flaps - this bottom flap when there are two, the monoflap when there is one – are called sweat flaps.)

Why do top riders in all English disciplines prefer not to use this proposed solution of extra wide trees with extra padding if this is the ultimate answer? It would make life ever so much simpler for the saddle fitter, saddle manufacturer, trainer, rider, horse, etc. Logic dictates that if this were truly the solution the whole industry would follow this current fail, but the truth is that the preference to get horse and rider as close as possible to each other using the saddle as the interface to allow maximum communication and aid without impeding performance capability and creating long term damage. The saddle pad should be used only for what it was intended to do - to protect the leather from the horse's sweat - on an English saddle. In some parts of Europe people don't even use saddle pads. The comfort for the animal is in the properly fitted saddle pad, not in the pad on an English saddle. In the Western saddle on the other hand, where the tree is stronger and larger, (and there is no protection) only a thin flannelette is nailed to the bottom so that the (manta)

With today’s technology (computerized saddle pads, fibreoptic cameras injected into the horse’s muscle under the saddle) during riding, x-rays of spine from the bottom through the horse’s rectum) we have a much better picture of fact - not theories based on opinions. Saddle fit is now truly a mixture of art and science.

Dust patterns and sweat marks are indicators of saddle fit – good or bad – a saddle hardly touches, such as the gullet or at the transitions between sweat flap and panel.

This is an excellent dust pattern on a saddle pad from a correctly fitted saddle. Most of this dirt occurs where there is the most access to air circulation and friction.

The only jumping saddle with shoulder relief

The only jumping saddle with shoulder relief
**SADDLE FIT: DUST PATTERNS AND SWEAT MARKS**

By Jochen Schleese, CMS, CSFT, CSE - ©2015 Saddlefit 4 Life® All Rights Reserved.

O nce the most misunderstood indicators of saddle fit – poof and hand – are the sweat marks left behind after a ride and when the pad has been removed. Logic dictates that the dust pattern on your pad and the sweat marks on your horse should ideally look somewhat like the photoshoot attached. The most dirt is accumulated where the most movement is – in the front shoulder moving back and forth, and in the back, where the back moves up and down. The quick explanation is that no dirt should show where the rider mounts the horse this increases to about 75%. The reason why we want this white triangle in the saddle pad – it indicates that all effort has been made to free up the front and the back of the saddle so the horse can bring up its back, engaging the hamstrings. This first step for the horse to shift the weight from the forehand to the back hand is to have this ability to bring up its back. Only then can they be "free" to push and stop under with the headquarter. By doing so, the horse is able to shift the weight to the forehand from the hamstrings. As a result, the saddle will fit better because the white triangle is the area that is pressed snugly against the body. With the saddle being the snuggest fit under the tree points and the most dirt will still accumulate at this back, where most of the dust from the outer environment, the 'pounee' or touch from the skin to the shirt occurs. The least amount of saddle dirt will be where the saddle is pressed snugly against the body. With the saddle being the snuggest fit under the tree points and the most dirt will still accumulate at this back, where most of the dust from the outer environment, the 'pounee' or touch from the skin to the shirt occurs. The least amount of saddle dirt will be where the saddle is pressed snugly against the body. Most of the dirt occurs where there is the most friction due to movement between skin and material will occur. Large kinked - shaped (6 – 8") long) dry spots are acceptable under the stirrup bar, but dry spots found on the saddle support area with a circumference of approximately one inch actually indicate points of concentrated pressure from lumpy feeling.

Most English saddle trees have a slight curve on the shoulders of a human body) this is where the least amount of dust from the outer environment will accumulate. (here is where the least amount of friction due to movement between skin and material will occur. Large kinked - shaped (6 – 8") long) dry spots are acceptable under the stirrup bar, but dry spots found on the saddle support area with a circumference of approximately one inch actually indicate points of concentrated pressure from lumpy feeling.

With today's technology (computerized saddle pads, fibreoptic cameras injected into the horse's muscle under the saddle during riding, x-rays of spine from the bottom through the horse's rectum) we have a much better picture of fact - not theories based on opinions. Saddle fit is now truly a mixture of art and science.

Whether the dress shirt fits or not (is a correct fit), the rider mounts the horse this increases to about 75%. The reason why we want this white triangle in the saddle pad – it indicates that all effort has been made to free up the front and the back of the saddle so the horse can bring up its back, engaging the hamstrings. This first step for the horse to shift the weight from the forehand to the back hand is to have this ability to bring up its back. Only then can they be "free" to push and stop under with the headquarter. By doing so, the horse is able to shift the weight to the forehand from the hamstrings. As a result, the saddle will fit better because the white triangle is the area that is pressed snugly against the body. With the saddle being the snuggest fit under the tree points and the most dirt will still accumulate at this back, where most of the dust from the outer environment, the 'pounee' or touch from the skin to the shirt occurs. The least amount of saddle dirt will be where the saddle is pressed snugly against the body. Most of the dirt occurs where there is the most friction due to movement between skin and material will occur. Large kinked - shaped (6 – 8") long) dry spots are acceptable under the stirrup bar, but dry spots found on the saddle support area with a circumference of approximately one inch actually indicate points of concentrated pressure from lumpy feeling.

Most English saddle trees have a slight curve on the shoulders of a human body) this is where the least amount of dust from the outer environment will accumulate. (here is where the least amount of friction due to movement between skin and material will occur. Large kinked - shaped (6 – 8") long) dry spots are acceptable under the stirrup bar, but dry spots found on the saddle support area with a circumference of approximately one inch actually indicate points of concentrated pressure from lumpy feeling.

With today's technology (computerized saddle pads, fibreoptic cameras injected into the horse's muscle under the saddle during riding, x-rays of spine from the bottom through the horse's rectum) we have a much better picture of fact - not theories based on opinions. Saddle fit is now truly a mixture of art and science.

Today are still made as they have always been made, and will allow the male anatomy to sit comfortably and balanced. Generally speaking you are looking at a fairly wide saddle and a smaller seat to accommodate the pelvis – but of course there are exceptions to every rule. Important is that the rider feels comfortable first, and then the saddle needs to be fitted to the horse (which means more than simply moving the flying around – it needs to fit at various other key performance indicators as well such as the gullet channel, the length, etc.)

But if the saddle does not fit the rider and he is comfortable, then it doesn’t really matter how well the saddle fits the horse – because he will perform better to his full capability as the rider’s discomfort will translate down.

Unfortunately, for the most part, dressage saddles have not evolved terribly much over the years, except maybe slightly – there are alternatives available and if they are vocal enough in their demands the industry will change!