



## Caring for Your Side Saddle

Thank you for hiring a side saddle from us. We hope you get hours of pleasure from it but we hope you won't mind us giving you a little advice on caring for it whilst it is in your possession.

Your side saddle is an antique and therefore needs a little more care and attention than a modern day saddle but nothing complicated, just the application of common sense really!

**Please NEVER hang your saddle over a stable door, horse box partition, fence or similar.** Because of its construction it has more weight to the nearside and can therefore easily fall off a door, partition etc. resulting to damage to the tree or pommels that cannot be repaired.

If you are looking for somewhere to put your saddle temporarily – after riding whilst putting the horse away, after stripping the horse off in a show class etc. – the best place is flat on the ground with the panels to the floor. Be mindful of where the floor is though, **don't put it on wet ground** as the panels will soak up the wet and you don't want a damp saddle on your horses back. If you are in the show ring and the ground is wet, put a rug, coat or something else between the ground and the saddle

**Try and avoid standing your saddle on its head** as you might an astride saddle as it can damage the pommels.

Between uses, a regular saddle rack will do the job just fine. Floor standing ones are usually better as side saddles are significantly heavier than astride saddles and the last thing you want is to come back and find your saddle on the floor where its weight has pulled the rack off the wall, but if your only option is a wall hung rack, please check it can take the weight of the saddle securely! Equally a well-padded (old blanket or a couple of towels to smooth of the sharp edges) milk crate make a very good saddle rack or transportation rack!

**Try if you can to store your saddle somewhere that isn't damp or too hot** as you will either end up with mould on the saddle or very dried out leather. If your saddle has a cover, please use it as it will protect the saddle.

Clean your saddle as you would an astride saddle. Wipe off dirt from the leather with a damp sponge and then give it a liberal dressing of saddle soap. If your saddle has a doeskin seat and pommels, do not get it wet or soap it but brush it off with a soft brush to keep it clean. **Never use any suede cleaning products.**

The panels of your saddle may be linen or serge or a combination of both. Clean the linen with a slightly damp sponge – do not soak the linen as it will take a long time to dry and **please don't use whitening products on the linen** as it rots the fabric! To whiten the linen use a chalk block as this will spruce it up for the show ring and does no harm to the linen. If you have a serge lining there is no need to whiten it. So long as the linen is clean a judge won't mark you down as it's now common knowledge that the whitening products damage the lining. If you do get a stain on the linen, warm water and mild detergent with a sponge will do the job. **Do not scrub the linen as this will damage it.** Brush serge with a dandy brush to keep it clean.

**Once a month please feed the leather parts of your saddle with a good leather balsam**, do not oil it as this will encourage mould. Think of the leather as the skin of a 'mature' lady that needs moisturising to keep it supple. Use Efax or a similar leather balsam

**Try not to get your saddle soaking wet** as it really doesn't do it any good. If however you get caught out in heavy rain and it does get wet, dry it out slowly at room temperature and then when fully dry give the leather a double treatment of balsam. If you are showing and need to dismount for any reason during the class, throw a rug or coat over the saddle to protect it.

If the lining of your saddle gets damp from horse sweat, sponge it off as described above to remove the sweat and then put it on the saddle rack on top of a thick towel to dry out.

**Please regularly check stitching**, girth straps, buckles etc. to ensure they are in good condition. When we hire our saddle to you it has been checked by a qualified saddler that understands side saddle but these are old saddles and stitching does deteriorate and leather does dry out or wear. We want you to be safe and an unexpected break in stitching on a stirrup leather, girth strap, buckle etc. is a surprise nobody wants! **If you are concerned about the saddle for any reason please contact us immediately.**

Minor leather repairs can be undertaken by your local saddler but anything else, including **flocking, must be undertaken by a saddler that understands and works regularly with side saddles** as it is a specialist skill.

**If you have any concerns about your saddle or are unsure about any aspects of its use or care, please do not hesitate to contact me as I am always happy to help**

Enjoy your riding

*Pippa*

Pippa Doran

Just-So Equestrian Events