



# *Easy Fit Saddles*

***We're all about the fit!***

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## **EQUINE 3-D BACK PROFILING SYSTEM**

### **IT ALL BEGINS WITH THE SADDLE TREE**

How your saddle fits, or conforms to your horse's back, is determined primarily by the shape of the tree inside the saddle. If the tree doesn't fit properly, neither will the saddle. Saddle pads may help for fine tuning a relatively close fit, but cannot completely compensate for a drastically improper fit, therefore should not be used as a permanent substitute for a truly, proper fitting saddle tree.

### **WHAT IS PROPER FIT?**

We define proper fit as achieving contact between the tree and the horse's back over as large an area as possible while not creating pressure points during normal riding activity. You want the tree to distribute the combined weight of the rider and equipment, thus reducing the pound per square inch ratio.

Utilizing our 3-D back profiling system to take multiple measurements along your horse's back will allow us to build a very accurate and comfortable tree for your horse! A well designed tree will fit a range of horses. The horse in the middle of the range will be fit the best but the large amount of surface area on a western bar and the design of our bar, allows the saddle to be used comfortably on horses on both sides of that "ideal fit".

### **WHEN TO MEASURE**

It is important to measure the horse in their normal working shape. If they are normally fit, measuring when they are over weight will give different results. If they are normally heavy, then that is when you measure them.

### **OBSERVATIONS**

- Ensure your horse's hooves are trimmed evenly. Square the horse on level ground.
- From the tail, look down the back to the shoulders to determine symmetry. Check the spine to determine if it is straight. It is estimated that approximately 80% of horses have larger shoulder musculing on the left; it is similar to most humans being right-handed. Occasionally a horse will be so dominant in one limb or the other, that the more developed shoulder does become a fitting concern.



- View from the side: your horse may look like it is built up or downhill (Line A) but is the saddle support area, uphill or downhill? The horse in the picture above appears to be downhill when looking rump to wither but the saddle support area (Line B) is fairly level. A picture and measurements will be helpful.



## **SORT THE TEMPLATES INTO PILES**

Sort according to the letter in the center of the cards. When you start fitting the cards to the horse they will be easier to find. In general cards marked with a “A” are for the front, “B” for the middle and “C” for the rear saddle support area of your horse. Further they are marked with an “S” for single backed horses (spine prominent) and “D” for double back horses (muscle on either side of the spine is prominent). But these are generalities; it is up to you to find the best fitting card for each area. The long cards marked with an “R” measure the rock along the length of the horse’s back.



## **BEFORE YOU START MEASURING**

You will need a **helper** to hold the horse and keep him straight. You will also need **masking tape or chalk marker** to mark points on the horse, a **pen & paper** (see page 8) to write down your measurements and a **camera** to take pictures. Have the horse stand as squarely as possible on as flat a surface as possible, with his head straight forward and at its normal working height when the measurements are taken. Standing with a hip cocked or a turned, raised or lowered head will change your results.



## **FIND THE BACK OF THE SCAPULA:**

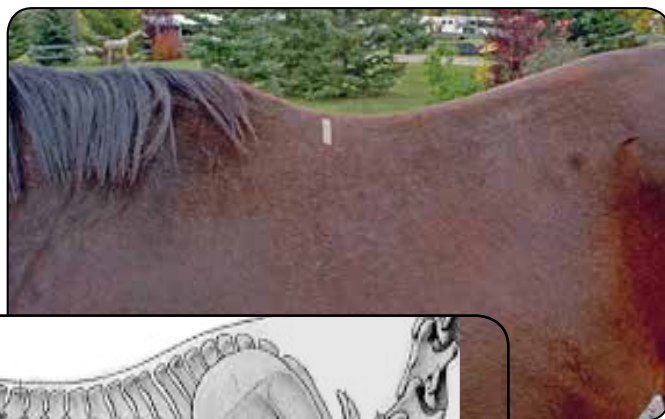
The scapula bone runs from just below the wither to the point of the shoulder. A half-moon shaped piece of cartilage sits atop the bony part and is what we see on horses that have a visible scapula.

Stand your horse on level ground, and feel below their wither for the back edge of the scapula. To help you locate it you can place one hand below his wither and lift his front leg forward. You will feel the scapula moving under your hand. When the horse stands squarely with weight on all 4 feet, mark the back edge vertically with a piece of tape or chalk line. This will be the “A” mark .



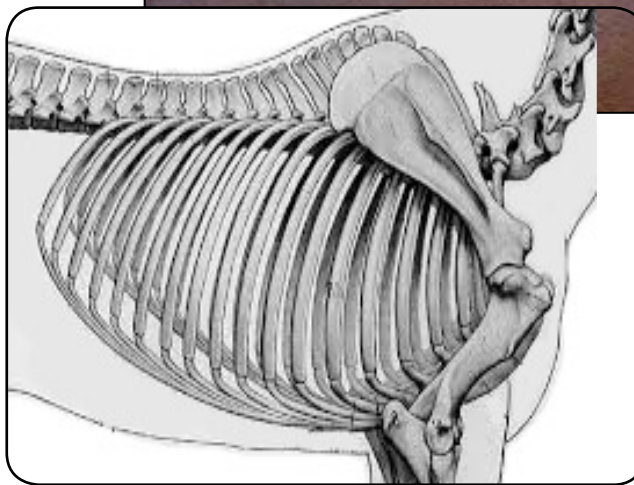
## MARK THE BASE OF THE WITHERS

Stand to the side and determine the point that the base of the withers levels out to spine. Mark it with tape or chalk on both sides. This will be the “B” mark used when aligning the “R” (Rock) card.



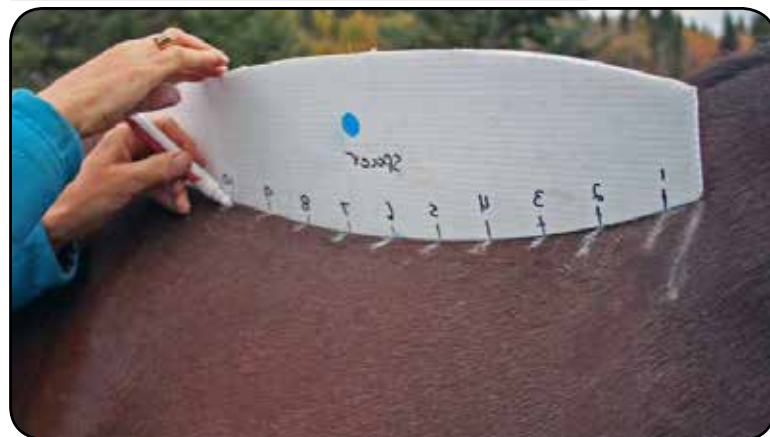
## MARK THE LAST RIB

The ribs bow or curve out from the belly and then back in where they attach to the spine. Look at your horse's flanks and note where the hair changes direction. The hairline almost points upward as if indicating where the last rib is located. You can palpate along this line lower down to locate the rib, and follow it up. It will disappear under the musculing but you will get the direction to locate where it meets the spine.



## MARK POINTS ALONG THE BACK

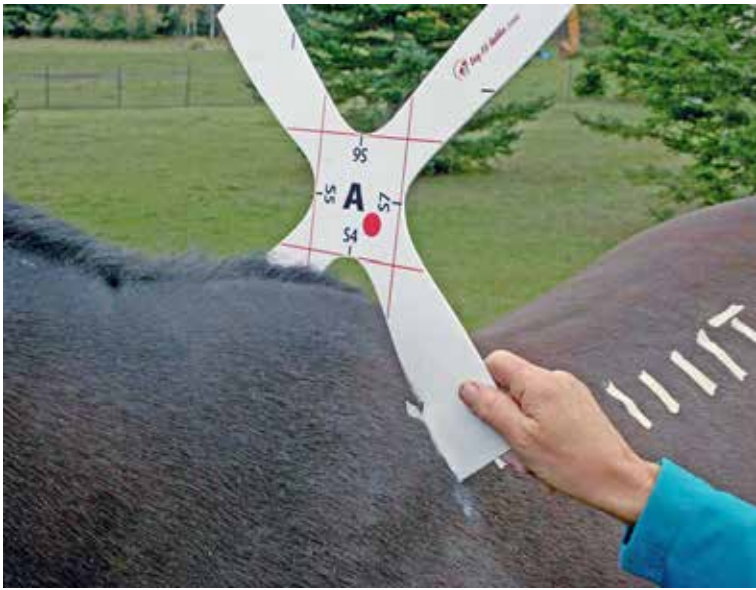
Place the front edge of the spacer card on your first mark behind the scapula, then mark off every 2 inches until you come to your last rib mark or the 10th mark on the spacer card.



## NOW YOU ARE READY TO USE THE TEMPLATE CARDS

Starting at the first mark behind the scapula, place one of the “A” cards on it vertically. (The smallest size is S4A.) Note the center of the spine and align it with the center mark on the card. Hold the cards gently so that you are not pushing down. Work through the “A” cards until you find one that you think fits the closest. Double check your selection by trying a size larger and a size smaller. Make sure you check on both sides, especially at A, to see if the same shape fits both sides equally well. Take pictures with the card in place. This lets us see not only where the cards are placed but what sections of the card may be lifting off the horse and what sections fit well. If you have problems deciding between two shapes, send us pictures of both. Write down the size for each position on your paper, noting the location and card letter-number combination.

Do the same through the center of the back using the B cards, and finally the C cards. Work your way down the spine finding the best fit possible at each location. There is no definitive point as to when to change from A to B to C, only when the previous letter no longer has large enough options. Try to use a “C” card for your last location.



**Bad fit, gap over the withers**



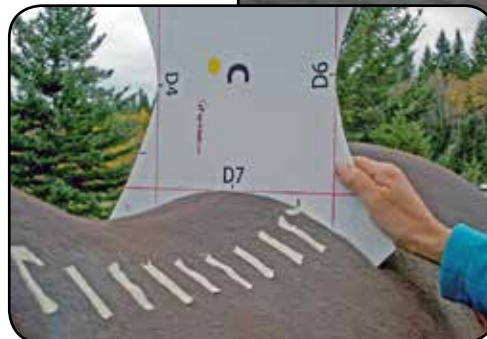
**Good fit, no gap over the withers, arms of template are flush against the horse.**



In the picture below, the D7 card, digs in a little at the bottom. With the picture we can see that it fits pretty closely, but it is a bit small. Try the next size larger..

## MARK THE OFFSETS

The offset marks are used to help place the Rock card in the proper position on the horse's back. They are the marks 3.5 inches off center on each profile card and correspond to the center of the tree bars. Use your best fitting card in the first position and the last position, ensure that the center mark is centered on the spine and mark the offset using tape or chalk. Turn the card around and mark the offset on the other side of the horse. Find the best fitting card in the last position and mark the offset on both sides.



## FIND THE BEST FITTING ROCK CARD

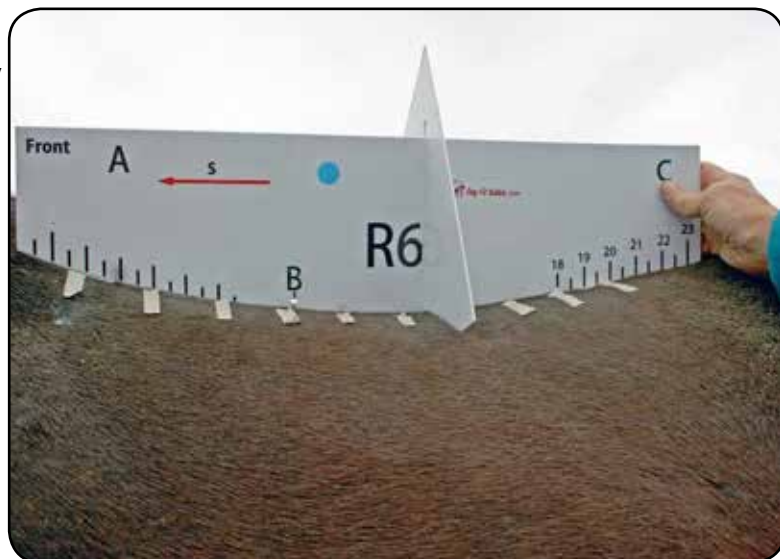
For this measurement it is important to ensure that your horse's head in its normal working position, they are squared up and have weight on all 4 hooves.

Each rock card has a different Rock profile top and bottom. Note the "front" or "A" marked on the card, make sure the front lettering is right side up and toward the front of the horse. Align the card over the offset mark in the front "A" and rear "C" position that you marked earlier.

Slide the card front to back on the horse's back so that the "B" mark (in the middle of the Rock card) is over the base of the horse's wither that you marked earlier. (You may have to bend back the front of the card out of the way if it doesn't allow the rock card to sit down into the curve of the horses back. Attach the rock card positioner to the rock card at the "B" position. The positioner will angle the rock card at 90% degrees to your horse's back in the B position. The correct angle will effect the fit. ( The positioner in the picture above needs to move forward to the B position.)

Record the "R" number that best fits your horse's back. Try one size larger and one size smaller to make sure you have the best fit. Make sure your horse is square and hooves are bearing weight. Measure both sides of your horse to identify any asymmetry from one side to the other. Take pictures of both sides.

Utilizing the scale up front, record the distance between the base of the wither or "B" position to the back of the scapula "A position". Then do the same from the B position back to the last rib T18 or the 10th mark.

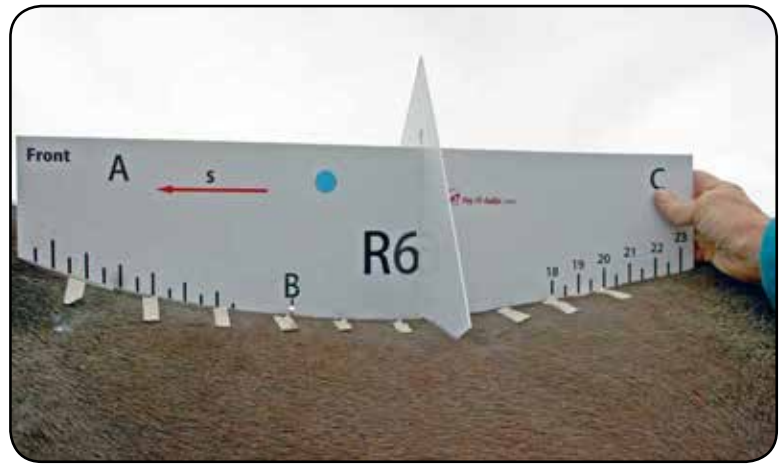


## ADDITIONAL PHOTOS:

1) With the markers still on the horse, stand **perpendicular to the horse's barrel** and take a picture to get a good side profile of the horse's back. Place the appropriate "R" card on the back and take another picture.

2) Stand on a small step stool or mounting block a meter or so **behind the horse**. With your handler holding the horse as straight as possible, take a picture of his spine showing from his tail to his ears.

3) Take additional pictures of **any card fits that you are unsure of**.



**Easy Fit Saddles**

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*Easy Fit Saddles*

### Rider Details

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Location \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Referred by: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Prov: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ Weight: \_\_\_\_\_ Height: \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

### Horse

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Directions: \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Breed: \_\_\_\_\_ Discipline: \_\_\_\_\_ Weight: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Sex \_\_\_\_\_ Condition \_\_\_\_\_ Height: \_\_\_\_\_

Symmetry / Asymmetry: \_\_\_\_\_

Other comments: \_\_\_\_\_

### Measurements

S	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Rock
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\_\_\_\_\_



## Saddle Options

**Fork:** Barrel All Around Wade English Cut Away Endurance Cutting Reining

**Horn:** Yes No

**Seat Size:** 14" 15" 16" 17"

**Cantle Height:** 3" 4" 5"

**Cantle Binding:** Laced Cheyenne Roll Pencil Roll

**Leather Colour:** Brown Black Chestnut Natural

**Seat Leather Colour:** Brown Black Red Blue Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Rough Out:** No If Yes: Seat Seat Jockey Fender Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Border:** No If Yes: Pattern \_\_\_\_\_

**Tooling:** No If Yes: 1/4 Tool 1/2 Tool Full Tool Pattern \_\_\_\_\_

**Fender Length:** Short 30" inseam Medium 30-34" inseam Long 34"+ inseam

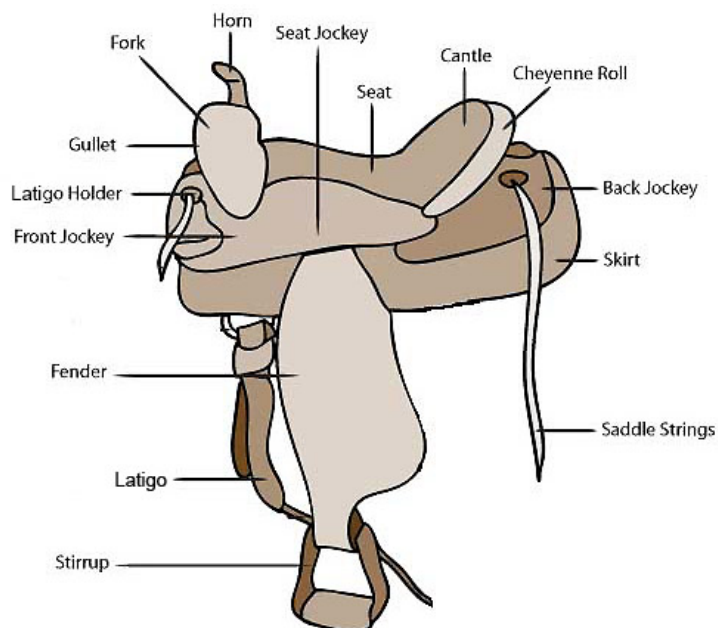
**Stirrups:** Plastic 3", Wooden 4", 3", 2", Wooden offset 3" Aluminum offset 2", Endurance 4"

Other \_\_\_\_\_

## Accessories

Saddle Pad: \_\_\_\_, Cinch: \_\_\_\_, Bridle: \_\_\_\_, Breast Collar: \_\_\_\_, Saddle Bags: \_\_\_\_,

Other: \_\_\_\_\_



## Notes: