

SOCIETY OF MASTER SADDLERS

Saddle Fitting Qualification Training Course

Course content

Health and safety.

Principles of saddle design and construction.

Saddle Trees: Different options in shapes, materials and sizes, and their effect on the fit of the saddle

Results of saddle testing using Pliance and Gait analysis.

Approach to practical saddle fitting:

- Customer care and initial approach.
- Recording details of horse, rider and proposed use.
- Costs and charges for saddle fitting.
- Selection of suitability.
- Recording of the fitting process including back assessment.
- Code of practice for saddle fitting.

Veterinary:

- The structure of a horse's skin.
- The effect of pressure on upper and deeper tissues.
- Process and effect of compromised circulation in skin or muscle.
- Saddle's potential to affect nervous responses.
- Guarding response in muscles.
- Short and long- term effects of an ill- fitting saddle- a veterinary view.

Safe handling of horses. Safety and your responsibilities whilst saddle fitting.

Simple locomotor system:

- How horses move.
- Structures involved.
- Complexity of total system.
- Effect of compromise of one or more parts of the system.
- How the tack might compromise the system.
- The effects that a 'lame' horse can have on the fit of a saddle.
- Bio hazard and hygiene procedures.
- Roles of various para professionals- physios, chiropractors etc.

The influence of the rider and rider requirements.

Saddle trees.:

- Demonstration of trees on horse's backs.
- Practical tree fitting on horses, assess and discuss.

Condition scoring & conformation

- Practical evaluation of a range of horse's conformation.
- Head, neck and forelimb.

- Shoulder and wither.
- Saddle area.
- Girth line.
- Loins.
- Croup, quarters and hind limbs.

Practical evaluation of horse's action in hand and on the lunge.

- Relationship between conformation and action.
- Observation of good movement in all paces.
- A saddle fitters' view

Identifying faults in saddles

- Practical assessment of saddles for fault finding

Practical saddle fitting:

- Use of the 15- point procedure.
- Use of the 7- point recognition of a good fit.
- Principles of a good fit
- Demonstration of taking templates and measurements.
- Back assessment- a saddle fitter's view.
- Practice templating and assessing the back.
- Difficult fits and solutions.
- Adjustment to fit: pads, aids, and other influences. (girths, bridles etc.)
- Advances in design. Pliance and gait analysis. Research. Results.
- Assessment briefing - knowing what to expect

Practical Saddle Fitting covering:

Templating and back assessment
 Horse conformation, Movement & Description
 Rider influence
 Saddle fitting

Assessment will be undertaken either directly after the course or at a later date when sufficient experience has been completed and will include:

WRITTEN PAPER COVERING ALL UNITS

PRACTICAL ASSESSMENT OF FOUR UNITS

Conformation & Action in Hand, Horse description
 Saddle Assessment and Fault Identification
 Taking Templates and Measurements
 Practical Saddle Fitting of two horses, GP and Dressage

(Candidates must pass all units, including Flocking & Flocking Adjustment, to gain the certificate and must successfully fit both saddle fitting horses at any one assessment)