



SG Saddles

BALANCE AND COMFORT FOR YOU AND YOUR HORSE



What can cause saddle slip?

As a saddle fitter, minimising saddle slippage is a priority. But if the saddle is well fitted and balanced and there is still slippage, what could be the cause?

1. **Conformation** – there are definitely certain shapes of horse where saddle slippage is more prevalent. Wider, barrel shaped horses may see some saddle slippage sideways. A pony that is wide through its trunk but then has flat shoulders and no withers is likely to suffer from the saddle slipping forward (In this case sometimes the only solution is a well made crupper)
2. **Lameness** – it has been well documented that saddle slippage can be seen on a horse that has asymmetries in its gait. In a mild hind limb lameness the saddle will often slip to the side of the affected limb. Foot balance is another important factor – did you know that saddle slippage can start to occur just 4 weeks after shoeing due to a foot imbalance?
3. **Straightness** – young horses are often unbalanced and will travel with their quarters in on one or both reins. Lateral deviation of the quarters or wither drop to one side will cause saddle slippage.
4. **Asymmetries** – we often see a horse with one shoulder larger, or further back, than the other or more muscle development on one side of its back than the other. This will need to be taken into account when fitting the saddle with careful flocking or a remedial pad.
5. **Crooked rider** – many riders have aches and pains themselves that they never get treated. This can be the cause or effect of crookedness in the saddle. There are many Biomechanics clinics now which are an excellent way of highlighting any areas in your own body that you may need to work on.
6. **Uneven stirrup leathers** – these should be checked regularly. Even the non- stretch can stretch. Its useful to get into the habit of swapping them over on a regular basis so you are not constantly putting weight through the same leather when mounting.



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7. **Mounting** – ALWAYS use a mounting block. Mounting from the ground will displace the saddle and put a huge amount of unnecessary pressure on your horses back.
8. **Position the saddle correctly** – if your saddle is positioned too far forward or too far back it may slip or have excess movement. The tree of your saddle should sit behind the scapula and within T18 (the last rib).
9. **Saddle pads** – if you are suffering from saddle slippage then avoid shiny saddle cloths – sorry! A well made cotton cloth or anti-slip saddle cloth should be used. It is worth spending a bit extra on these as they will benefit you and your horse in the long run.
10. **Girths** – a non elastic, anatomical girth is going to help with stability. If you prefer the elastic girths, make sure there are at least 3 layers of elastic on BOTH sides of the girth. You may also want to check what girth straps you are using. Many saddles now come with 5 straps to choose from, so check with your fitter you are using the correct ones. Oh, and make sure your girth is tight enough – girth up slowly but check it at regular intervals once mounted.
11. **Condition of horse** – Has your horse changed shape since your last saddle check? If there has been a change in diet, workload, habitat or change of season then it's quite possible he may have changed shape. New saddles should also be checked after 12 weeks as the flocking will bed down and may need adjusting.
12. **Posture** – if you are stationary and you feel like your saddle is sitting to one side then make sure your horse is standing square. Quite often horses can collapse out one side of their rib cage giving the feeling the saddle is crooked.