

EQUI-MAPPING
Double Diamond Equine
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Saddle Fitting 101

Does your horse have any of these symptoms: irregular sweat patterns, total wet back including the spinal area, dry spots, white hairs, subtle or not-so-subtle behavior problems such as tail swishing, refusing to go downhill, bucking, pinned ears, bad attitude, limited range of mobility and ease of gaits, trouble taking a lead, chronic lameness, repeated chiropractic sessions, elevated swollen vertebrae, saddle sores and galls, hollow way of going (head high, hollow back), inability to travel right or left softly and with ease, dropping the shoulder, running from you in the pasture, bad attitude when girthing and more? Does your saddle rock front to back, slip when standing in the stirrups, lay down on the wither or neck, do you have the feeling of falling forward or backward, do you need spurs to get your horse going, can you see from front to back under the saddle along the spine, does your horse 'flinch' when you brush certain places?

If you answered "YES" to any of these, then you may be riding your horse in a saddle that isn't matched to his/her back.

THERE ARE NO BAD SADDLES OUT THERE!!!! There are, however, bad combinations. The trick is to match the riders' weight and posture with the tree in that saddle, the pad, and the back of that particular horse.

THERE IS NO CONSISTENCY in trees out there either. If one brand saddle with a full quarter tree fits your horse well, don't assume the other brand will be anything like it. The gullet opening may be the only thing that matches, but the flare, width, twist and rock could be, and most likely is, totally different.

THERE ARE NO SADDLES THAT ARE LIMITED TO GAITED HORSES, MULES ETC. Because there are just as many variations in those categories as there are trees. Mule bar saddles can fit mules and horses depending on their shape. Saddles sold as "gaited saddles" fit all kinds of horses and mules, ponys, drafts. And, within a breed there are just as many variations like flat back, sway back, high withers, low wither, wide flat, boney, mutton withered, sloping and barrel shaped.

DOES YOUR SADDLE FIT? Until now, we have all used valuable sight and hands-on techniques to make evaluations of saddle fit: position of the saddle (level, moving, rocking, slipping), sweat marks, dry marks, white hairs, hand under the front, wither tracings, hand feel etc. While widely used and valuable, these techniques tend to look at fit in sections, not as a whole, and are not on the moving or mounted horse. For example, a saddle may give adequate clearance over the wither, but the rock in the tree is a terrible match for a straight-backed horse therefore it moves back and forth, or it may indicate just the right amount of shoulder freedom, but sit down on the wither or lay flat along the spine. Technology has enabled us to see more than that.. Pressure mapping is not new technology, but new to the saddle fitting category. Pressure mapping is currently used to measure pressure points for wheel chair patients, to assess human gait and footfall from an accident or mobility issues and more. Pressure Mapping for saddle fit evaluation has taken the guess work out of saddle fit.

EQUI-Mapping is an accurate diagnostic tool. Using Forced Array technology inside a thin nylon pad that sits on the bare back of the horse, the pad, saddle, and rider, we are able to give you and your equine professional accurate, precise readings of how your saddle fits both in static and mobile format. EQUI-Mapping shows color-coded pressure points, points of contact (or not such as bridging), and pounds per square inch both in 1D and 3D form in an easy to read format that you, the rider, can see for yourself on our computer screen.

We can work with your trainer, saddle fitter and reflocker/refurbisher, vet, farrier...whoever you feel would benefit from knowing and seeing for themselves.

We can provide you with printed copies of your scans, and offer you solutions to your fit issues along with other opinions from other equine professionals. We are not in competition with equine professionals but hope to offer them tools to perform what it is they do to help your horse **perform at their best and stay out of pain.**

WHAT IF MY SCAN IS TERRIBLE AND MY SADDLE DOESN'T FIT? If your saddle is too narrow, there is little that can be done unless there are adjustments built into the saddle or there is enough room to redistribute padding depending on the saddle. We suggest with reflocking. Otherwise, we can rescan with a thinner pad, shimmed SKITO pad etc.. Sometimes this works, other times this introduces other fit problems such as bridging and new pressure points. Sometimes you just need a different saddle.

EQUI-Mapping Saddle Fit Evaluation



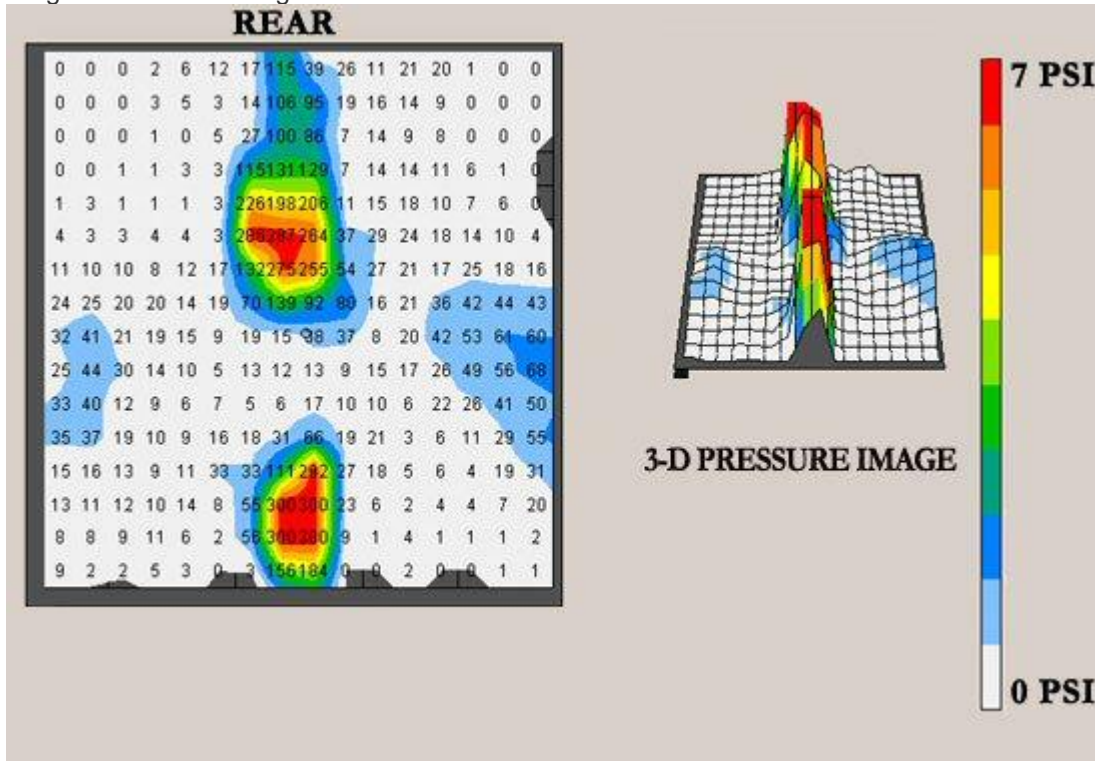
Find out if your saddle fits by scheduling a pressure mapping scan of your horses' back mounted / stationary or mounted / moving at your barn, event, meeting.

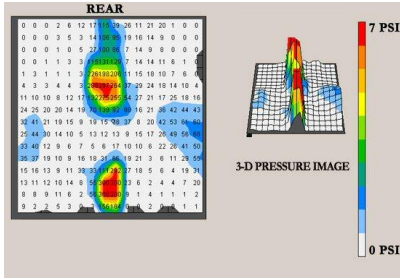
This photo was taken at McClendon Hills Equestrian Community, Southern Pines, N.C.



Here are two scan examples:

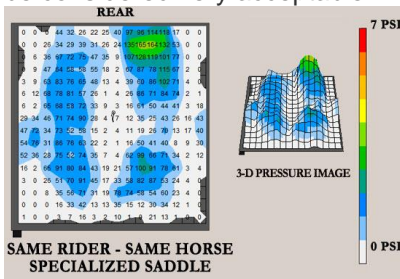
This is a scan of a Treeless saddle without correct padding and the rider is sitting. Note the pressure points continuously along the spine where the rider is seated. Pressure points in this case measured approx. 5-6 psi, enough to cause nerve damage, disc issues, numbness, white hairs (dead tissue). PLEASE use the Skito Equalizer pad made for the treeless saddles for correct spinal clearance and weight distribution, and pay special attention to the weight of the rider riding in a treeless saddle.





(Click image to Enlarge)

This is a scan with a fitted Specialized Saddle with the same rider and same horse moving, not stationary. Note that there is no bridging, no pressure points over 3psi. , even wide contact on the bars from front to back. This scan would be considered very acceptable with little to no corrections needed.



(Click image to Enlarge)



[Equi-Mapping](#) clinics can be scheduled at your barn, meeting, event. All it takes is one contact person. We provide posters, you do the rest by taking appointments and arranging the location, date, time. Scans can be done on a single scan basis, or unlimited scans on an hourly basis for a thorough work up. We can work with your vet, trainer, or saddle fitter, farrier and/or send you your scans for further assessment. Call for more details and to schedule a session 336-267-0276. Click here for [EQUI-Mapping Clinic Poster](#)

Check our [CALENDAR](#) for our live appearances. Call ahead for an appointment for a scan.

