

TACKING UP IN STEPS

1. Put your horse on the Cross Ties or tie him in the Stall, depending on the horse. Use quick release "slip knots" if tying.



2. Groom the horse.



3. Put on horse boots or polos if needed



4. Slide the martingale or breast plate over the horse's head and onto his neck
5. Put on the saddle pad. Place it on the horse's withers, a bit higher up than normal. Slide it down a bit, so all the fur on the horse's body is going in the direction of the saddle and the pad under it.



6. Place a wither pad, riser or supracor on top of the saddle pad
7. Place the saddle gently on the horse's back. It should sit in the middle of the saddle. Again, make sure it doesn't interfere with the horse's shoulder. If it is sitting correctly, most of the time there will be a thin strip on the saddle pad that the saddle sits straight above, and should be coming out from directly underneath the pommel. Take note to also lift the top of the blanket (pad) into place, where the pommel on the saddle is. It's easiest to lift both blanket AND saddle up, so they can come down gently from an inch or 2 above the withers. If your horse wears a breastplate, now is the time to attach it to the Ds of the saddle



8. **Put on the girth.** Some horses bloat, so take this into account, if he is known to do this, tighten it gradually on both sides when he exhales so he can't do this and tighten it again prior to mounting. Ideally, you should have the girth about $\frac{3}{4}$ as tight as you prefer it. If using a breastplate or martingale, take the leather loop between the horse's legs and slip the girth through the loop. Check that the loop remains centered under the horse's chest and between his front legs. Make sure to tighten the girth gradually.

Time to Bridle

- 1. Unbuckle the cross ties.** Put the reins over the horse's head. This is so they don't get tangled in all the other straps on the bridle and so that you will always have control over the horse.



- 2. Put the bit in the horse's mouth.** Put a finger on each side of the bit and gently push against the horse's mouth. It's also a good idea to put your thumbs in the very corner of the horse's mouth, where he has no teeth.



- 3. Put the crown/headpiece of the bridle over the horse's ears (some put in the farthest ear first, so the**

ear nearest to you can easily slide over, in comparison to doing it the other way around).



- 4. Buckle the throat latch.** When you buckle it you should be able to put four fingers in between the throat and the throat latch.



- 5. Buckle the noseband.** If your horse wears a martingale, slip the noseband through the loop, just behind the buckle. You should be able to fit one or two fingers under it.



Tips

- When approaching your horse with an item, always walk slowly so your horse won't get spooked. Never walk directly behind or in front of the horse and place your hand on the horse's shoulder when on reach.
- Always tighten the girth again once you have warmed up as horses tend to puff their stomach out when you tighten their girth before mounting. If after you've warmed up your horse still puffs his stomach out when you tighten his girth then tighten it as you walk, he cannot puff his stomach out and walk at the same time. Be careful they can kick you!
- In the winter, be sure to warm up the bit so the horse will not become bit-shy.
- If you are using a girth with only one elastic side, remember the elastic side goes on the horse's left side ('lastic on the left)
- Always talk to him before you walk up behind your horse, just to let him know you are there.
- Make sure the girth or bridle isn't too small for the horse.
- If you must put the saddle down on the floor, put it on top of a rug or coat, leaning against a wall with the seat facing the wall, the pommel down and the cantle (that is the back of the saddle) resting against the wall with the girth over it to protect it from scratches.
- Some horses are "girthy", that is, they don't like their girth being tightened. They may attempt to bite you if you tighten their girth, so if your horse is like this, simply be wary. (Tip: When you first put the girth on; keep it loose at first. After leading your horse around for a few minutes tighten the girth again because the horse will have let out air. Gradual tightening the girth instead of tightening it all the way at once can help girthy horses.)