

Tack Cleaning

Tack should be cleaned every time after your ride. For safety reasons, check your tack every time before you ride and inspect it closely when you are cleaning it. If at any point while you are cleaning your tack, you notice that something is breaking (example: the stitching on a stirrup leather is loose), please notify a staff member or your Barn Day captain.

Cleaning Leather Equipment (this includes saddles, bridles, martingales, breastplates and some girths):

Use warm water and wring out a sponge until it is nearly dry. Rub some glycerine saddle soap on the sponge. Wash the dirt, sweat and hair from the tack, keeping the leather as dry as possible. **Water rots tack** so instead of making a sudsy and soapy sponge, use elbow grease. (Lecture leader: please demonstrate for Barn Day)

→ Elbow Grease: hard physical work, especially vigorous polishing or cleaning

Bridles:

1. Clean the bit:

Use a clean sponge or rag with warm water. Rub the bit till it shines. It can be difficult to clean the “twisty” bits sometimes. Let the bit soak in clean hot water to loosen up the dirt and grime (make sure the other parts of the bridle don’t get wet). It should be easier to clean after the soak. **Reminder: do not use soap of any kind on the bit!**

2. Clean the leather parts of the bridle with a damp sponge and some saddle soap (see “Cleaning Leather Equipment”). Pay extra attention to places where sweat usually builds up (the reins, under the brow band and inside and the noseband).
3. Figure 8 the bridle and hang it neatly on the horse’s hook

Martingales and Breastplates:

Clean this the same way you would clean the bridle. Do not figure 8 it in the bridle but rather, just hang it neatly on your horse’s hook.

Girths:

If using a leather girth, clean it the same way as you would clean the bridle. The girth can get especially dirty on the underside, so make sure to use lots of elbow grease! If you are using a fuzzy girth and it is very dirty, take a hard brush and brush it off. When done cleaning the girth, put it back on the horse's hook.

Saddles:

Clean the saddle using circular motions, similar to how you would curry a horse. Clean all parts of the saddle including the stirrup leathers, billet straps and the underside of the saddle. If you use too much water when cleaning, remove excess water with a clean towel or rag.

How to Figure 8 the Bridle

1. Hold the buckle of your reins in your right hand, and cross the throatlatch around the front of the bridle going counter-clockwise. Slip the throatlatch through the reins and ...



2. ... bring the throatlatch around the front of the bridle counter-clockwise once again. Slip the throatlatch strap on the crownpiece through the keepers, without buckling.



3. Pull out the ends of the noseband so they are on the outside of the cheekpieces. Cross the ends behind the reins and bring them to the front under the noseband. Fasten by slipping the end with the holes through the end with the keepers. (Again, don't buckle.)

