

How to Strip Clean Tack

Benefits

- To prolong the life of your bridle and saddle
- Feeds the leather and keeps the leather supple.
- Enables you to check your tack for safety
- Prevents rubs and sores on your horse
- And to keep a nice appearance

You will need:

- ✓ Two sponges, three if oiling or conditioning leather
- ✓ Small bucket with warm (not hot) water
(TIP) Never use hot water since this removes the natural oils from the leather causing it to become brittle. Never use detergent in the water.
- ✓ Leather cleaner (like Castile soap or Murphy's Oil Soap)
- ✓ Leather conditioner (like pure neatsfoot oil or Lexol conditioner)
- ✓ Leather protector (glycerine saddle soap)
- ✓ Saddle rack or sawhorse and tack-cleaning hook to hold tack
- ✓ Clean dry cloth or rag

Extra tools:

- ✓ SOS pads
- ✓ Toothbrush
- ✓ Toothpicks
- ✓ Metal polish
- ✓ Hard, stiff brush

Step 1.

Cleaning the Bridle: Begin by taking the bridle completely apart.

Step 2.

Put the bit into a bucket of warm water and give it a good wash with a sponge, then dry it off with a clean cloth. A dish scrubber or toothbrush can be used to remove excess grime.

Step 3.

Wipe off the grease and dirt from all the leather pieces pressing firmly with a damp sponge. Pay particular attention to the inside of the bridle. This is where you will find the most "jockeys" (dark greasy dots or patches of dirt that stick to the leather.) You can also scrape off any jockeys with your nail or use a dish scrubber or toothbrush.

If your bridle is excessively dirty you may need to use leather cleaner such as Castile soap. Spray on a dry sponge and scrub to remove dirt. Rinse sponge and wring out until almost dry and remove the detergent from the leather. (Never leave detergent on your leather unless it is specially made to do so.)

Step 4.

Check your bridle for safety, making sure there are no cracks in the leather or weak or ripped sticking. Check for excessive stretching of the leather as it may snap under pressure.

Step 5

Oil or condition your leather if necessary. You do not need to do this every time you clean your bridle. Over conditioning can cause the stitching to rot or the leather to stretch.

Only Oil if the leather seems dry or stiff.

Use a dry sponge or rag. You can also paint the oil onto the leather. Next bend the leather back and forth, and roll it between your hands. This helps the leather soak up the oil or conditioner and you can tell when it becomes supple. Wipe off any excess oil with a rag.

Step 6

Protect the leather by using glycerine saddle soap. The soap seals the pores of the leather and nourishes it. If using spray soap, spray a damp sponge and rub into saddle. Don't use too much water or make a lather.

Work the soap well into the leather pieces. You should be able to see a fingerprint on the leather after you have rubbed the soap in, and the leather should feel smooth and supple.

Use a toothpick to clean out the holes in your leather.

Step 7

Now put your clean bridle back together. Store in a clean place.

Step 8

Clean the saddle. Remove the girth and saddle pad (numnah). Remove excess hair from the girth and the saddle pad using a stiff, hard brush. If the girth needs a good cleaning (and is nylon) put in washing machine securing the buckles in an old sock and tie with a hair band. Remove the stirrup leathers and irons. Take off the rubber pads and place both irons and pads in warm water. Remove dirt or grime with a rag or if necessary use and SOS pad to remove rust stains. Wipe clean with a dry cloth. Replace pads in irons. Use metal polish if necessary to polish irons.

Wipe over the saddle with a damp sponge beginning with the panels underneath, then the girth straps, the saddle flaps, and the seat area. Pay attention to the folds and creases of the saddle. Use a toothbrush to get into hard to reach areas.

Do not use hot water or detergent on the saddle. If leather cleaner is necessary, use a damp sponge and make sure to remove excess soap.

Clean the saddle leathers.

Check the saddle for safety. Pay close attention to girth straps. Make sure there is no excessive wear, cracks in the leather. Check the leathers for loose stitching or stretching of the leather which would cause the leather to break.

Step 9

Condition or oil the saddle if needed. Use the same steps as you did with the bridle paying ' attention to rolling the saddle flaps to limit excess oil buildup and check condition of the leather. TIP: Always condition before saddle soaping the saddle as glycerine soap seals the pores of the leather.

Step 10

Saddle soap, (glycerine soap) the saddle. If using a spray, work in well with a dry sponge. If using a bar, dip the bar into the water and use a dry sponge. Do not create a lather. Begin underneath, moving to the side panels, the girth straps and the seat. Don't forget to do your stirrup leathers. Now, put the saddle back together. Tip the saddle forward to firmly push the leathers down onto the bar, run your stirrups up.

TIP: When replacing your leathers swap the out from the other side.

The leather always stretches more on one side when mounting.

Give your tack a good clean each time you use it. Strip clean your tack once a week. Wash saddle pads, girths and girth covers once a week. Do not use bleach and be sure to rinse thoroughly. Bleach and soap can irritate your horse's skin.