

Stephanie Bloom Saddle Fitting Agent for AH Saddles Ltd

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Photos: Please stand your horse or pony up as square as possible, on level ground, and with the head and neck in "neutral", neither up or down or to one side. Then stand level with the horse's girth line and take a photo directly from side on including **the whole horse from nose to tail and all four feet!**. If I have asked for one with the saddle please girth the saddle up firmly with no pad and repeat the same photo. The rear photo should also have the horse standing as square as possible, head in neutral, and please get up high enough to clear the hind quarters so the whole of the area where the saddle fits is visible and the back of the withers shown clearly, please see <http://www.ahsaddles.com/#!taking-photographs-for-saddle-fitting/c1mei>.

Emailing the photos as large sized files and as proper separate attachments is preferred, if they get embedded it takes an age to save them to your file, and if small it's hard to see detail. Sending photos well before the appointment means I can be sure I can have the right stock in time.

The appointment: My days out fitting can get very busy please have your horse ready for its saddle fitting at the time we agreed – I will call or more usually text if I will be more than 15 minutes late, sometimes I'm even early!. An area under cover is needed for the initial fitting, and then a level rideable area – an arena or dry field – will be needed to fully test the saddle. The rider on the day should be the main rider and ideally anyone else that will be riding the horse should also be present.

If the fitting is going to be in the dark good lighting will be needed both under cover and for riding unless otherwise agreed. Ideally I would like to see the saddle in all paces, on turns and circles and, if relevant, over jumps but understand this is not always possible for whatever reason. If you are not able to show all paces for any reason I reserve the right to charge for a second visit in these circumstances.

Please have your own stirrup irons to hand, and stirrup leathers unless you need to purchase leathers from me. I will need to protect the flaps of the saddle while you try each one – I usually put the leathers under the flaps, but if you would like a more natural feel please feel free to snip the toes from an old pair of **thick** socks, they can be slid over your leathers, with the buckle sticking out of the top, and held there with an elastic band eg plaiting band.

Please bring an example of the pad you would like to use with the saddle, and any corrective pads you may own. Choice of pad can affect the fit.

I carry most sizes of long girths (usually 38"-54") as demos, and a couple of dressage girths (22" and 28"), let me know well in advance if you don't have a girth and have a very large horse or very small pony.

Please allow 2-2.5 hours for a saddle fitting and up to 90 minutes for a saddle check. I try to allow for extended appointments, and for traffic, but sometimes things can't be helped and I will run late, the later your appointment in the day the more this might be likely. Please be patient, I will generally text to let you know if I will be more than 15 minutes late, as soon as I can.

Payment: The callout fee, and subsequent adjustment charges, are paid to me personally on the day. Cash or cheque please for the first visit as I do not accept cards. If I find significant muscle damage or major asymmetries with your horse or pony I may recommend a shim pad or numnah made by Mattes and this is paid for to me personally. I will usually email an invoice for this, to be paid by BACS, though a cheque or cash on the day is fine. Only some horses will need one though they are also good for horses that change shape seasonally and they can also be useful as an aid to concussion absorption, especially with heavy riders where the horse may need a smaller seat size than ideal. These are also payable to me personally. I may have hi tech impact foam half pads available too for test ride and purchase.

Paying for the saddle : AH Saddles Ltd accepts credit or debit card payments **only** for the saddle (**cash by arrangement only**) and any other leatherwork. Sometimes I will not have the right stock in which case the second visit is free. Some fittings will need a slight change/customisation to a standard model so that it is right for you or your horse, and a deposit will usually be taken and a second call out charged for a custom saddle delivery.

Other products: I try to carry a decent selection of stirrup leathers (in brown leather, black usually to order) – please do let me know if you would like me to bring along anything specific, I can bring girths with enough warning but we usually send out from HQ within 48 hours of the appointment.

I carry a small range of the Mattes four pocket correction pads, occasionally non-correction sheepskin lined pads, most in brown with the odd one in black or white. I also usually carry plain cotton numnahs in black and brown as they are such a good fit for our GP saddles. I cannot guarantee to carry a particular style of pad that may be required for a fitting

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but can obtain pads of any style/colour/finish that Mattes produce to post out to you. Please see www.numnah.com and photos on my Facebook profile for more information.

Remedial Saddle Fitting

Horses that have had saddle fitting problems, or have had other injuries or lameness, or are very young and likely to change shape very quickly, will usually be deemed a remedial fit. Especially in the case of muscle loss from a poorly fitting saddle you may need a thicker saddle pad such as the sheepskin Mattes pads mentioned above. Most horses falling into this category will need more regular saddle checks as they are likely to change shape faster than average. I'm always happy to explain why a horse would be classified as a remedial fit, but the issues must be taken seriously and fittings organised regularly, or you may find that you end up with a sore horse and increased bills from your equine bodyworkers. I cannot take responsibility for issues arising from a saddle that is not checked at the recommended schedule.

In some cases a course of in hand work (www.straightnesstraining.com is a great resource) may be recommended before a saddle fitting can occur, occasionally we may have a suitable used saddle to fit that will last for a few months while your horse changes shape. We try everything we can to avoid you having to replace a new saddle but horses do change shape and it's not possible to fit a saddle that will be guaranteed to fit "forever".

Product Price List:

Saddles, Stirrup leathers & girths – as per the AH Saddles Ltd website, price list also included in their brochure pack

Mattes Correction shim pads – eg. sheepskin half pads £163, half lined numnahs £191

Mattes plain cotton numnahs to neatly fit our GP saddles £43

Mattes Melp leather wash £6-18

Conditioner £15-28 (Sedgwick and Saddler's Blend usually stocked in 500/550g)

Please see separate price list for callout, consultation and adjustment fees

Saddle Maintenance: I will leave you with a saddle/leather care information sheet and a sample of Sedgwick conditioner on the day. I recommend that the saddle is checked at 2-3 months after purchase and offer a free flock adjustment at that point (within max. 3 months of purchase) to compensate for any settled flocking, callout applies. After that we try to work with you to minimise expense but keep the saddle fitting well, with a combination of showing you how to monitor saddle fit, sending me photos and follow up call outs. Please call me within 2 months of your purchase if you would like to take advantage of the free partial flock adjustment and of course please call if you have any concerns that your horse may have changed shape before that time, a new saddle sometimes causes rapid change.