

Tack Inspections

Ideally, you clean your tack on a regular basis, which makes it last longer and feel better against your horse's skin. During cleaning, you're able to check the condition of your leather and its stitching, and address problems promptly. Inspect stitching carefully, as over time it can fray and become loose. Cracking, fraying and dryness in leather or nylon components of your tack are all signs that it may need replacement or repair. Buckle holes, whether on bridles, martingales, stirrup leathers or billet straps, should not be torn or ripped.

Suggestions for Tack Inspection:

- Check the width of your stirrups or irons. Your irons should be one inch wider than your boot so that when your foot is in place, you have ½ inch of space on each side. Your boot should not fit too snugly into your iron, or it could be difficult for you to separate your foot from the iron.

Note: Remember to check the width of your stirrups when you purchase new or winter boots. Winter boots are usually wider than all-season boots.

- Check the release latch on your saddle's stirrup bar. It should be in the open position to allow the leather to slip from the bar if necessary.

- Stirrup leathers are under stress while you ride. Check the part of the leather where it attaches to both the buckle and the iron to be sure it isn't cracking. Always replace compromised stirrup leathers.

- Check your reins. If they have lacing, the laces should be intact. Be sure that the hooks and studs or buckles that allow the reins to attach to the bit are in good repair.



Check to see ½ inch of space on each side of boot when placed in the iron.



Check that the release latch is open.



Inspect the crease in the stirrup leather where it runs through the stirrup iron.



Check your reins.



Inspect the stirrup leather near the buckle.

Other Places to Check:

- Replace rubber bands on peacock irons if they begin to crack or fray.
- Check your girth. When your girth is tightened on your saddle, you should have at least two holes above the buckles and at least one hole below the buckles on each side. Make sure that the stitching is intact and that any elastic has not become frayed or brittle. If girth elastic is frayed and not retaining its original shape, the girth should be replaced.
- Check for rust on the metal parts of your tack. Bits and buckles should be free of rust. If rust cannot be removed from the item, it should be replaced.
- Look for and replace broken keepers on bridles. Inspect stitching at cheeks, throatlatch and noseband. Any loose stitching should be repaired by a professional tack repair service.

About Borrowed Tack

You should always check borrowed tack thoroughly before use as you cannot be sure that it has been cared for properly.

Related Topics

[Tack and Leather Care](#)

[How to Care for Tall Riding Boots](#)

[Helmet Storage and Use](#)

[How to Fit a Halter](#)

For more assistance or to request a catalog, call 1-800-989-1500 to speak with a Dover Saddlery product advisor, or stop by any of our retail stores.

Visit DoverSaddlery.com for a complete store listing and full product offering.