

Tips for Fitting Blankets or Sheets

You've selected a blanket or sheet for your horse, but now you're wondering if it fits well and how all the buckles and straps should be fastened. Follow these steps to check the fit of your horse's clothing and to learn how to properly adjust it to ensure his comfort.

- 1 Place the garment on your horse and fasten the chest closure. The fabric at the chest should be able to overlap, with the buckle or clip adjustment somewhere near the middle. When the chest closure is fastened appropriately, the tail seam should sit at the point where you want the clothing to end. This point corresponds to the measurement you took as described in "How to Measure A Horse for a Blanket," and is a matter of personal preference.
- 2 If the blanket seems appropriate after Step 1, adjust the belly surcingle(s). Your blanket may have a belly band, two bias (angled) surcingles that should cross under the belly, or one or two straight surcingles. No matter what type you have, these straps should be set so that you can slide only one flat hand between the strap and the belly. If you can fit more than this, then there is enough room for a horse's leg to become entangled while lying down or rolling. Less than this amount of space can cause the blanket to rub the horse.
- 3 If the blanket has leg straps, then pass the left strap through the horse's hind legs

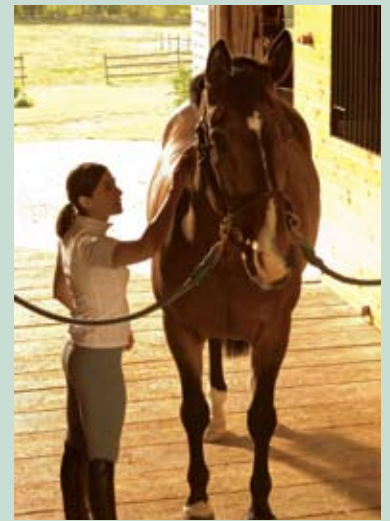
and clip it to the dee ring on the left side of the blanket. Cross right leg strap through the left leg strap and clip it to the dee ring on the right side. These straps should be adjusted so that you can fit only one hand's width between the strap and the inside of the leg. If they are too long and hang down to the horse's hocks, then a leg can become entangled. If the straps are too short, they may inhibit movement and may rub the tender insides of the gaskin or groin area.

- 4 If the blanket has a tail strap, it should be adjusted so that you have about a hand's width between the strap and the horse.
- 5 With fastenings done, stand back and look at the overall effect of the clothing on your horse. The shoulders of the blanket should not be stretched tightly over your horse's shoulders, yet the blanket should not appear too large either. The hem should not hang at the horse's knees or below. If the neck opening is too large or too wide, then your horse could get its foot caught in the opening while lying down or rolling, and it may rub your horse's shoulders.



Blanket Fitting Tip

The best way to put a sheet or blanket on your horse is to tie or cross-tie him or have someone hold him so that his movements are limited. Fasten closures working from the front to the back. By starting at the chest closure and working toward the belly surcingles and finally the leg straps or tail cord, the blanket is more stable should your horse suddenly move. For the same reason, the best way to unfasten a blanket is to start at the back and work your way to the front.



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