

Tack and equipment

Contents

Introduction	3
Dressage.....	4
Tack permitted.....	4
Bits used in a double bride.....	6
Saddle and girth	6
Other tack	7
British Dressage	8
Show jumping	8
Martingale.....	8
More information	8
Show jumping saddle	9
Stud guard	9
Front tendon boots	10
Fetlock boots.....	10
Other tack which is commonly used but not shown in the annotated photograph	11
One day eventing	12
Further information	12
British Eventing rule book.....	12
Dressage phase	14
The bridle	14
Show jumping phase	15
Boots can be worn as for normal show jumping as shown below.	15
Grip reins.....	16
Elasticated breast girth	17
Bridles as for dressage but can now include:	17
Pelhams.....	17
American or continental gags	18
Hackamore and any form of bitless bridle.....	19
Martingales	19
Not allowed.....	21
Cross country phase.....	21
Grackle noseband	22
Pelham with roundings	22
Event saddle.....	23

Tack and equipment

Logos must comply with BE rules	23
5 point martingale.....	24
Stud guard	24
Cross country boots	24
Leg protection for eventing	25
Endurance	25
Endurance riding ruling body.....	25
Endurance saddle.....	26
Stirrup	27
Showing.....	27
Breed society websites	27
General information on tack.....	28
Saddles – general guidelines for all classes.....	28
Bridles – general guidelines	29
Boots	29
Cob class and hunter.....	29
Hacks, riding horses etc. plus lead rein ponies	30
Lead rein ponies and first ridden ponies	31
Working hunter.....	31
Coloured Horse and Pony classes (CHAPS)	32
Mountain and moorland ridden classes	33
Mountain and moorland in-hand classes	33
Fit tack.....	34
Fitting bridles	35
Main points for fitting a snaffle bridle	35
Types of martingales.....	35
The double bridle	35
Main points of fitting a double bridle.	36
How to fit a pelham	36
Fitting saddles	36
How to fit a saddle	36
This should be done with the horse mounted and unmounted	37
This should be done with the horse mounted and unmounted.....	37
Fitting exercise boots.....	38
Activity	38
Clean and check tack.....	38

Tack and equipment

Before competition	39
Cleaning tack	39
Check tack	39
During and after the competition	40
The day after the competition	40
Other equipment required for competition	40
General essentials	41
Grooming kit	41
Tack	42
Basic first aid kit for humans	43
Basic first aid kit for horses	44
Other items	45
Longer trips	46
General supplies for stabling	46
Additional list for specific competitions	47
Types of studs	48
Plaiting kit	48
Other items	49
Endurance grooms	50

Introduction

An important skill required for preparation for competition is an up to date knowledge of the tack used and allowed by the relevant ruling body. The rule books of these ruling bodies can change yearly so it is best to refer to these before any affiliated competition. Many unaffiliated competitions are run 'under the rules' for the equivalent affiliated competition so always check.

Tack and equipment



[Dressage saddle, showing a long, straight flap](#) from Wikimedia [CC BY-SA 3.0](#)

Dressage

Tack permitted

This will depend on the level of dressage competition. The picture shown is from Gran Prix level.

Refer to the rule book for appropriate tack for each level.

Tack and equipment



['Hanoverian mare Sunrise by Singular Joter, Rider: Imke Schellekens-Bartels from the Netherlands'](#)
by Nick from Wikimedia [CC BY-SA 3.0](#)

Note: No horse boots allowed in dressage arena. Refer to rule book about saddle cloth.s

Tack and equipment

Bits used in a double bridle



'[A curb bit and a bradoon \(double bridle\)](#)' by Alex brollo from Wikimedia [CC BY-SA 4.0](#).

A **double bridle**, also a **Weymouth bridle**, is a bridle that has two bits and four reins (sometimes called "double reins"). One bit is the *bradoon* (or *bridoon*), is a modified snaffle bit that is smaller in diameter and has smaller bit rings than a traditional snaffle, and it is adjusted so that it sits above and behind the other bit, a curb bit. Another term for this combination of curb and snaffle bit is a "bit and bradoon," where the word "bit" in this particular context refers to the curb.

They are required for upper level FEI dressage tests (Prix St. Georges (PSG), Intermediare, and Grand Prix), and are optional in other tests – check the rules. They are also permitted in the dressage phase of eventing at the Intermediate or Advanced levels, although not required. (In eventing, even at the advanced level, snaffle bridles are still the norm.)

Taken from [Wikipedia](#)

Saddle and girth

Dressage saddle, showing deep seat, longer straight cut saddle flaps and long girth straps, used with a 'Lonsdale Girth' which allows closer contact between the rider and the horse through the saddle flaps. A white saddle cloth is generally used.

Tack and equipment



'SDIM4784' by Artur Malinowski, Flickr [CC BY 2.0](#).

Other tack

- Other tack Martingales and bearing, side or running reins of any kind are forbidden.
- Reins with elasticated inserts are not permitted,
- Bandages, boots or any sort of blinkers are not permitted.
- Tongue straps are not permitted.
- Breastplates and breast girths are permitted. Cruppers are permitted but are not allowed for tests run under FEI Rules.
- Neck straps or balancing straps (a loop on the front of the saddle) are permitted at all levels.
- Hoof boots or any forms of shoe replacement which cover the bulb of the heel are not permitted during competition.
- Rugs of any type may not be worn during a test.

British Dressage - Members Handbook 2015 (2016: 14)

Tack and equipment

British Dressage

Ruling Body for Affiliated British Dressage (BD) [rule book 2016](#). Go to page 92 rule 137 'A quick guide to BD Rules' (2016: 14)

Show jumping

Ruling body for affiliated show jumping is British Show Jumping. Visit page 100, [Section 2, Item 102](#).



['The British show jumper Michael Whitaker and Tackeray...'](#) by cladiogennan from Wikimedia [CC BY 2.0](#)

Note: Many bits are allowed in show jumping, refer to the rule book. Horse is also wearing ear protection to muffle the noise, to help them focus and to protect against flies.

Martingale

Many designs of martingales are available. The image shown here are of a running martingale which prevents the horse putting their head up too high but does not interfere with normal movement when fitted correctly.

More information

Breast plates and breast girths are also used. They help to prevent the saddle slipping back when the horse is jumping or galloping. Follow these links for more information.

- [Martingales](#)

Tack and equipment

- [Breast girths](#)



'[Baltic Cup Shannon Mejnert Sandy1](#)' by Malene Thyssen, Wikimedia [CC BY-SA 3.0](#).

Show jumping saddle

Show jumping saddle showing forward cut flaps to allow shorter stirrup length and flatter seat to allow jumping position.



'[Selle de saut d'obstacles](#)' by Bloody-libu, Wikipedia Public Domain.

Stud guard

Stud guard used in show jumping to protect the horses belly from being struck by the underside of the horses hooves when jumping. Many horses will wear studs in their shoes to give more grip to the

Tack and equipment

ground when jumping – these studs have to potential to injure the horse when they fold their front legs when jumping.



['Stud guard'](#) by markusspiske from Pixabay, CC0.

Front tendon boots

Open fronted tendon boots used for show jumping. These protect the tendons while leaving the front of the leg more exposed.



['Haras national Avenches'](#) by Ludovic Péron from Wikimedia [CC BY-SA 3.0](#).

Fetlock boots

Fetlock boots commonly used on back fetlocks to prevent injury.

Tack and equipment



['Protections du cheval - protège boulet'](#) by Blood1976, Own work. Wikipedia [CC BY-SA 3.0](#)

Other tack which is commonly used but not shown in the annotated photograph



[Protection d'un cheval - cloche](#) by Blood1976 - Own work from Wikimedia, [CC BY-SA 3.0](#)

Overreach boots come in many designs but the main aim is to protect the bulbs of the heel from overreaching which can happen more easily when the horse galloping or jumping.

Tack and equipment



[Guêtres, protèges-boulet, et cloches de CSO.](#) by Maloq - Own work from Wikimedia, [CC BY-SA 3.0](#)

Leg Protection for show jumping showing tendon boots, fetlock boots and overreach boots.

One day eventing

A **one day event** is where a horse and rider combination must complete the 3 phases of an **event** in **one day: Dressage, Show Jumping & Cross Country**. Although, due to the number of competitors, some competitors may do their dressage one day and the show jumping & cross country the next.

Further information

Visit the [British Eventing website](#) for more information.

Many of the rules used in BE are the same as in British Dressage. Generally all tack allowed by British Dressage is allowed in BE with the addition of boots, martingales and different types of bits in the [show jumping and cross country phases](#). See BD rules 2016, Section 14 pg 85 onwards.

British Eventing rule book

The rule book for British Eventing can be downloaded. See chapter 7, page 59 -65 for all relevant [information on permitted tack](#).

The following table defines the saddlery that is permitted, not permitted or compulsory at each relevant stage of National Events.

	Riding in exercise areas	Lungeing	Dressage tests	Show jumping & Cross country
Bit guard & tongue guard	✓	✓	✗	✓

Tack and equipment

Nose net	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ear covers*	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ear plugs	X	✓	X	X
Fly fringe	✓	✓	X ***	X ***
Snaffle bridle/miklem multi- bridle with permitted bit and without bit clips	✓	✓	✓	✓
Double bridle	✓	✓	X ****	✓
Running and Irish martingale	✓	✓	X	✓
Bib martingale	✓	✓	X	✓
Side, running reins and chambons	X	✓	X	X
Neck strap	✓	✓	✓	✓
Seat covers	✓	✓	X	✓
Boots, bandages	✓	✓	X	✓
Equiboats/hoofoats	✓	✓	X	X
English style saddle	Compulsory			
Flash, crossed (incl. grackle/Mexican) or dropped noseband only with snaffle bridle	Permitted			
Cavesson noseband	Permitted**			
Breast plate	Permitted			
Blinkers	Not permitted			
Tongue strap and/or tying down the horse's tongue	Not permitted			

Tack and equipment

Draw reins **Not permitted**

Standing martingale **Not permitted**

Any other form of martingale or gadget **Not permitted**

Sheepskin cheek pieces and any other attachment fitted to the cheek pieces that may affect the Horse's vision. **Not permitted**

Sheepskin nosebands	✓	✓	X	X
Coloured stirrups	✓	✓	X	X
Magnetic stirrups	X	X	X	X

* **Ear covers / protective fly hoods are permitted and may provide noise reduction. However, these will be systematically checked by Stewards at the end of the test to ensure that nothing prohibited has been added (i.e. special material) or is covered by the fly hoods. The fly hoods should be discreet should be discreet and should not cover the Horses' eyes.**

** Compulsory with double bridle

*** Only permitted if specifically authorised for all Competitors in exceptional climatic conditions by BE Steward

**** Double bridles are only permitted at Intermediate Novice and above for dressage

Dressage phase

The tack allowed in the dressage phase will depend on the level of competition that you are doing.

Best to refer to the rule book, but as a general guide: -

The bridle

Most snaffle bits are allowed. Double bridles are only used at the higher level.

Nosebands must be worn

No martingales or neckstraps

No boots or bandages in the arena

Tack and equipment

English or Continental style saddles are compulsory. They must be brown, black, grey or Navy. Brightly coloured saddles are not permitted.



'K20D5663' by Douglas O'Brien from Flickr [CC BY-SA 2.0](#)

Show jumping phase

Boots can be worn as for normal show jumping as shown below.



[Horse with boots on](#) from Pixabay used under public domain.

Tack and equipment

Grip reins



Grip reins are normally used for jumping, these give grip when the horse is wet or sweaty, rubber grip reins are the most commonly used.

Tack and equipment

Elasticated breast girth



Elasticated breast girth to prevent the saddle sliding back, which happens more easily on fit horses.

Bridles as for dressage but can now include:

Pelhams

Reins may be attached to leather 'D' rings so that one single rein can be used

Jointed Pelham with D attachments so that 1 single rein can be used.

Tack and equipment



[A Pelham bit](#) from Wikimedia [CC BY-SA 4.0](#)

American or continental gags



[Cross country horse](#) from Wikimedia public domain

Tack and equipment

Hackamore and any form of bitless bridle

There are many variations on the hackamore. The longer the 'cheeks' or shanks are on the side of the bit, the more severe will be the effect on the nose, poll and curb groove.



['Hackamore'](#) from Pixabay, used under public domain

Martingales

Martingales/breast plates with martingale attachments, 5 point breast plates

The horse is being ridden in a continental gag with a sheepskin noseband.

Tack and equipment



[Cross country horse](#) from Wikimedia public domain

Elastic Jumper Breast plate Competitors may not use a curb rein which passes through the rings of a running martingale.



[Elastic Jumper Breastplate](#) from Wikimedia [CC BY 3.0](#)

Tack and equipment

Not allowed

Competitors **may not** use a Market Harborough

Market Harborough's are **not allowed**. They are a type of running rein and can severely hinder a horse when jumping which makes them unsafe.



[...Horse wearing a bit with Market Harborough...](#)
from Wikimedia public domain.

Cross country phase



'[Badminton horse trials open ditch jump](#)' by Henry Bucklow/Lazy Photography from Wikimedia [CC BY-SA 3.0](#)

Tack and equipment

Grackle noseband

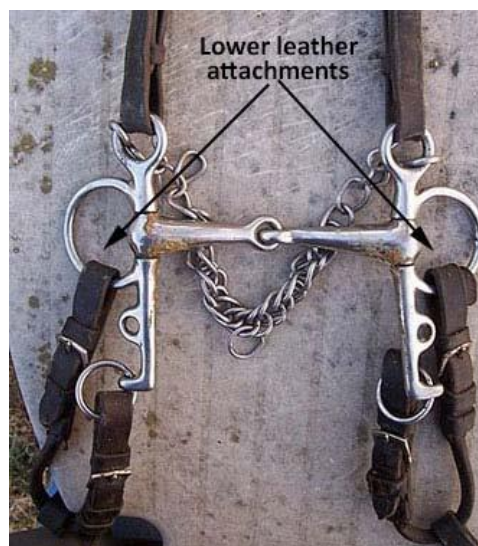


Grackle noseband, cropped from original image

Pelham with roundings



Pelham on horse, cropped from original image



[A Pelham bit](#) from Wikimedia [CC BY-SA 4.0](#)

Tack and equipment

Event saddle



'Event saddle' by Krimifreundin from Pixabay, CC0

Event saddle showing flatter seat to allow rider to slip their seat when jumping and forward cut flaps for shorter stirrup length. Similar to show jumping saddles.



[Polo saddle](#) from Wikimedia [CC BY-SA 3.0](#)

Example of an overgirth used for additional security/safety. Fastens over the top of the saddle and girth, through the part of the martingale strap which the girth is threaded through under the belly. The saddle in the photo is a polo saddle. Overgirths generally have elastic inserts.

Logos must comply with BE rules



Saddle cloth, cropped from original image

Tack and equipment

5 point martingale



5 point martingale, cropped from original image

Stud guard



Stud gaurd, cropped from original image

Cross country boots



'[Protections ...](#)' by Maloq from Wikimedia [CC BY-SA 3.0](#)

Tack and equipment

Leg protection for eventing

Cross country boots are thicker and provide more protection for legs than normal brushing boots as the obstacles jumped are solid and not designed to be knocked down. They have secure fastenings and many riders will also use sticky coloured tape wrapped around to give additional security to prevent them falling off. Over reach boots are normally used in the front feet as well to prevent injury.

Endurance

Endurance riding is an [equestrian](#) sport based on controlled long-distance races. It is one of the international competitions recognized by the [FEI](#). There are endurance rides worldwide.

Endurance riding ruling body

Ruling body in GB for Endurance riding is [Endurance GB](#). Visit their webpage for information on rules regarding tack.



'[Un cheval shagya en compétition d'endurance](#)' by Véronique Mestre Gibaud (Association française du Cheval Arabe-Shagya from Wikimedia [CC BY-SA 3.0](#))

Tack and equipment



Riders also often add a breast girth to keep the saddle in place while travelling over rough terrain.



Synthetic bridles are popular as they are easy to clean. Bits are often attached to the bridle with clips so that they can be quickly removed to let horses graze.

Endurance saddle



[Endurance saddle](#) by Eponimm from Wikimedia [CC BY-SA 3.0](#)

Although normal general purpose saddles can be used, endurance riders usually use one that is designed to be lightweight yet comfortable to horse and rider for long hours of riding. There are saddles designed specifically for endurance riding, though they are not universally used. They are light weight, have wider panels to distribute the weight of the rider and equipment over a larger area and have extra metal rings for the attachment of equipment.

Tack and equipment

Stirrup



'[Stirrup on an \(admittedly dirty\) endurance saddle](#)' by BLW from Wikimedia [CC BY-SA 3.0](#)

Light weight stirrups with a wider tread. For rider comfort.

Showing

Showing is an opportunity for horses and ponies to compete side by side with others of the same type — from hunters and working hunters to show ponies and native breeds, plus cobs, hacks, seniors and many more. The appropriate tack for each type of showing class will vary and it will be necessary to check with the rules to ensure that the tack used is compliant. If the class is affiliated to a society, it will follow the rules for that society. Sometimes the classes are run under the rules of a society but will not be affiliated.

Check the individual society's rules for tack as they all have variations, these rules can be changed annually so always check each time. The ruling body for the class is normally stated on the show schedule.

Breed society websites

The British Horse Show Association - This Association is dedicated to promoting the breeding and showing of Hacks, Cobs, Maxi Cobs and Riding Horses.

- [Home page](#)

Tack and equipment

- [Rule book for allowed tack page 10.](#)

The British Show Pony Society - BSPS – This society is for show ponies, show hunter ponies, working hunter ponies and mountain and moorland ponies (adult riders included)

- [Home page](#)
- Click on the 'book' with the horse's head on the right hand side of the page to [download the rule book](#). Page 9.

The Coloured Horse and Pony Society (UK)

- [Home page](#)
- [Rule book page 7 for allowed tack.](#)

National Pony Society (Scotland) The aim of the NPS is to promote the interests in the breeding, improvement, showing and welfare of the Native Breeds and the British Riding Pony in Scotland.

- [Home page](#) -
- [Rule book page 7 for allowed tack.](#)

Sports Horse Breeding GB

Sport Horse Breeding of Great Britain is the governing body for RIHS Hunter and Sport Horse classes (including working hunter horses), which are held at major shows throughout the country. As a Member of the World Breeding Federation for Sport Horses they are committed to supporting the industry by way of incentives for breeders, education, information and grading schemes.

- [Home page](#)
- Click on the download for rules and go to [rules 46 – 52](#).

General information on tack

Saddles – general guidelines for all classes

- Straight cut or working hunter saddles show more of the horse's shoulder and movement, so are preferable to GP saddles
- Brown or black tack – brown is preferred by traditional judges and is always correct in the show ring
- Either no numnah or one which is discreet and matches the horse and saddle

Tack and equipment

- Girths – should be brown or black to match the colour of the tack and preferably be made of leather.

Bridles – general guidelines

- Snaffle bridle for novice classes
- Double bridle or pelham for open classes. If a rugby Pelham is used use a slip head.
- Leather should be black or brown

Boots

- Horses - No boots or bandages except front boots in working hunter classes which **MUST** be removed before entering the ring for the ridden part.
- Ponies – boots may be worn front and back in the jumping section but **MUST** be removed for the ridden part.

Cob class and hunter

The bridle should be one of plain leather with a wide, flat noseband and browband.

A brown double or Pelham with double reins for open classes, snaffles for novices. Rugby pelhams should be used with a slip head.

The courser the cobs head the thicker the noseband should be.

Two hunters in the side saddle class. The width of the leather used on the bridles – especially the noseband - is right for these horses and this class.

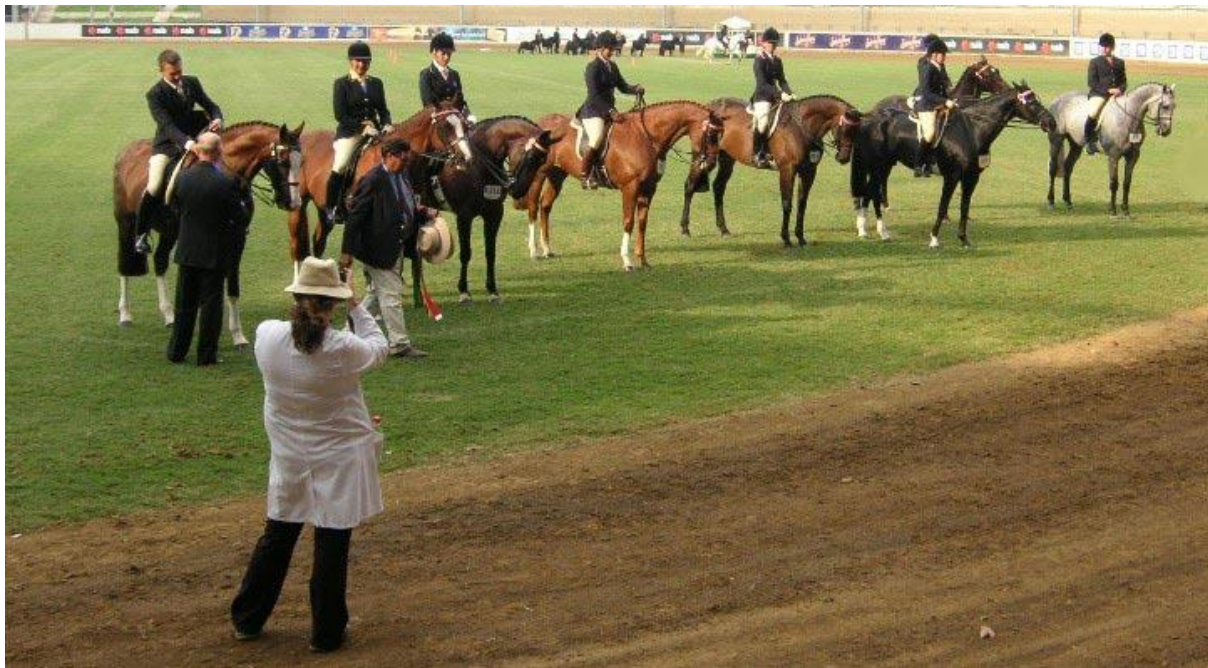
Tack and equipment



[Side saddle](#) by Brigette from Pixabay, CC0

Hacks, riding horses etc. plus lead rein ponies

Double bridles are preferable except in novice classes. The bridle should be a finer bridle with velvet, ribbon browband to complement the horses colour and the rider's jacket and tie.



[RAS blue ribbon](#) by TTaylor from Wikimedia [CC BY-SA 3.0](#)

Tack and equipment

A hack class. Note the cut of the saddles to show off the horses' shoulders to the best advantage and the type of bridles used. The browbands are ornate and the width of the leather chosen to enhance the horses face.



[Showing at the Herts county show with double bridle](#) by Thowra_uk from Wikimedia [CC BY 2.0](#)

Riding Horse with double bridle, narrow noseband and velvet browband.

Lead rein ponies and first ridden ponies

A snaffle bridle is compulsory, lead reins should be clipped to the noseband.

Working hunter

Tack for working hunter classes should be **plain in either dark havana or black leather**, There are **no restrictions on bits, martingales or nosebands**.

- **Bridles should be plain with no bling or anything coloured.** Rolled or padded browbands and nosebands are acceptable as long as they are all in the same colour eg: no white piping/padding.
- It is important to note that there must be **no change of tack between the jumping and flat/ridden phases**, so if you decide to wear a martingale for the jumping, it must stay on for the whole class.

Tack and equipment

- The **exception to this rule is protective boots**. Dark-coloured brushing boots are allowed for the jumping phase, but must be removed before the ridden judging. The inside of the boot must be smooth, the fixations must be non-elastic velcro and no hooks or straps may be used. The rounded rigid part of the boot must be placed around the inside of the leg. No hind boots or bandages are permitted in senior classes.
- **Numnahs should match the tack**, be kept close to the saddle and not interfere with the shoulder. They should be discreet and saddlecloths avoided.
- Girths **should be a dark colour**, preferably leather to match the saddle.



[Working hunter](#) by PublicDomainPictures from Pixabay, CC0

Coloured Horse and Pony classes (CHAPS)

Bridles should have coloured browbands.



Coloured horse wearing double bridle with velvet browband and a fairly straight cut saddle to show off the horse's shoulder.

Image courtesy of The Event Photographer.

Tack and equipment

Mountain and moorland ridden classes

Bridles should be plain and workmanlike, metal or clincher are permitted but some judges don't like them as brass was traditionally for stallions.



A highland pony wearing a workman like plain bridle and a saddle which is fairly straight cut to show off the pony's shoulder.

Image courtesy of Equinational.

Mountain and moorland in-hand classes

- White halter or rope halter is correct for:
 - New Forest
 - Highland (rope not webbing)
 - Fell
 - Dales
 - Welsh A, C & D
 - Youngstock – mares & geldings of any age
- Leather foal slips, followed by in-hand bridles are correct for:
 - Shetlands
 - Connemaras
 - Exmoors
 - Dartmoors
 - Welsh Bs
- In-hand bridles can be used for youngstock and broodmares

Tack and equipment

- Stallions should wear bridles with bits once they are over two years
- Yearling colts can wear bits but are usually led off the noseband
- Two-year-olds can wear nylon (training) bits but once they are 3 (esp large breeds) they are expected to wear proper stallion bits on an in-hand bridle. Small breeds often stick with a smaller bit so it does not draw attention away from the face
- Some breed societies state that stallion harnesses must be worn on horses over 3 years olds

Society websites for these classes are listed – visit the websites for more information on relevant rules regarding tack.

A well turned out Welsh Section C Stallion. Note the show bridle which enhances the horses face.



[A 14-year-old Welsh Cob stallion ...](#) by Eigenes Werk from Wikipedia, [CC BY-SA 3.0](#)

Fit tack

All tack being used on the horse should fit correctly and it is worth checking the fit of all tack each time the horse is tacked up to make sure:-

- that the bridle fit has not been altered after being used on another horse
- that the bridle has not been put together properly after cleaning
- that the saddle still fits - as over a period of time, the horse may change shape by either gaining or losing weight or muscle.

Tack and equipment

Fitting bridles

If a martingale or breast plate with martingale attachment is used, it makes sense to put the bridle on first.

When putting a different bridle on, or putting a bridle on a different horse for the first time, it is worth holding the bridle up alongside the horse's head as this will let you know if any major adjustments need to be made before putting on the bridle. It will also give you a rough idea if the bit will fit.

Main points for fitting a snaffle bridle

- The bit should be the right width for the horse's mouth – too narrow and it will 'pinch', too wide and it can be pulled from side to side which will not allow the centre of the bit to lie in the correct position, making it not as effective and uncomfortable for the horse. Normally, 0.5cm at each side of the mouth is fine.
- The bit should be at the correct height - 2 wrinkles should show at the corners of the mouth for the snaffle bridle. More than this is too high and uncomfortable, Less than this is too low and the bit will be uncomfortable and less effective. The following video shows [how to correctly fit a bit to a horse's mouth](#).
- The throat lash should be adjusted so that there is enough room for a hand to fit between the horse and the throat lash.
- The noseband fit will depend on the type of noseband, generally cavessons – height - 2 fingers width below the cheekbone and you should be able to slip two fingers width between the noseband and the horse.
- A noseband should never be fitted so low that it restricts the horse's breathing
- The browband should lie flat against the horse's forehead. Too big and it will flop forward, too small and it will pinch the horse's ears and the bridle will more prone to slipping off over the horse's ears. The following video shows [how to put on the bridle](#).

Types of martingales

There are many types of martingale; the most commonly used is the running martingale. Watch the following video on how to correctly [fit a running martingale](#).

The double bridle

The double bridle has 2 bits – 'bridoon' (snaffle bit but with smaller cheek rings) and the curb bit.

Tack and equipment

Main points of fitting a double bridle.

- The bridoon should [lie above the curb bit](#).
- The [curbchain should lie flat](#) and generally come into effect when the curb bit shanks are at 45 degrees.
- The curb bit will also have a lip strap attached to it, which is threaded through the central link on the curb chain and attached to the other side of the bit. This prevents the 'shanks' of the curb bit from moving about too much, it also prevents the curb chain from getting lost if it becomes unattached.

How to fit a pelham

This video shows [how to fit a pelham](#). This bit can be used with 2 reins or if a 'rounding, is used with one rein.

Fitting saddles

How to fit a saddle

The principle of [fitting saddles](#) is the same whatever the type of saddle and should be done with your horse standing squarely on level ground with his head and neck straight ahead, do not use a numnah.

1. Position of the saddle

Place the saddle slightly forward on the horse's withers and pressing down on the pommel, slide the saddle rearward until it stops at the resting place which is dictated by each horse's conformation and will always be behind the horse's shoulder blades. Too far forward will interfere with the horses movement.

2. Check the angle of the points

The points of the saddle are found in the point pockets, one on each side of the pommel of the saddle under the saddle flaps. The points should lie parallel to the withers. If the angles are too narrow, the points will dig into the muscles and also cause the middle of the saddle to be in uneven contact with the horse's back. If they are too wide the saddle will sit on the withers. To check the point angles, stand looking from the front with the flap lifted; the points should be parallel with the musculature within 10 degrees of the heaviest side.

3. Panel pressure and contact

Tack and equipment

Place one hand in the centre of the saddle and press down to secure the saddle in place as you test for panel pressure. Run your other hand between the front of the panels and your horse's musculature and feel for any uneven pressure under the points. While maintaining pressure on the top of the saddle, run your hand, palm up, under the entire panel along the back feeling for even pressure.

4. Pommel to cantle relationship

Visualize a straight line parallel to the ground from the pommel to the cantle. In saddles with deep or moderately deep seats, the cantle should be between 2 to 3 inches higher than the pommel. In shallower seats, such as close contact jumping saddles, the cantle may only be approximately 1 to 2 inches higher than the pommel. In almost any saddle, if the cantle is level with or below the pommel, the saddle is not properly fitted.

5. Level seat

Visualize the same straight line parallel to the ground and look this time at the deepest part of the seat. This area should be level in order to put the rider squarely on their seat bones and in balance.

6. Withers clearance

This should be done with the horse mounted and unmounted

There should be adequate clearance between the pommel and the top of the horse's withers, approximately two to three fingers. More than three fingers' clearance may mean the pommel is too high, i.e. the tree is too narrow. A saddle with less than 2-3 fingers may mean that the saddle is too wide. Horses with flat, round withers may have more clearance than usual under the pommel. In these situations you may need to rely more on the balance of the seat and pommel to cantle relationship. On horses with high, narrow withers maintaining proper clearance is something that has to be monitored and maintained.

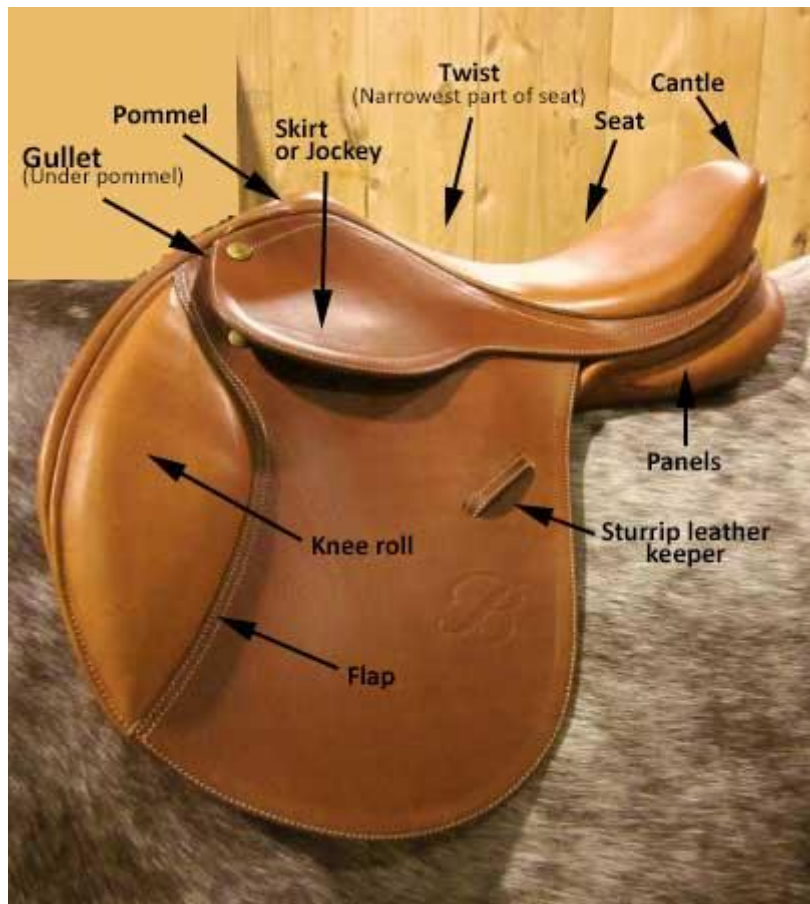
7. Channel clearance/Gullet width

This should be done with the horse mounted and unmounted

There should also be adequate clearance over the spine and connective tissue throughout the channel of the saddle. A channel that is too narrow will impede the horse's movement dramatically and may even cause the spine to be observably sore. Feel the width of the spine and connective tissue with your fingers and estimate its width. The channel of the saddle should

Tack and equipment

completely clear this width, resting on the long back muscle of the back called the longissimus dorsi.



[A Close Contact Saddle](#) by Danielle M. from Wikimedia, [CC BY 3.0](#)

Fitting exercise boots

This video shows how to [fit exercise boots](#).

Activity

Fitting tack is a practical skill and this now should be practiced.

Clean and check tack

All tack should be cleaned and checked for safety on a regular basis to preserve it, keep it comfortable for the horse and rider and to protect the horse and rider from unnecessary injuries.

Though the condition of your tack alone probably won't change the outcome of the class, judges do notice which exhibitors take the time to put that extra polish on their appearance.

Tack and equipment



[Tack](#) by DorianKrauss from Pixabay, CC0

Before competition

Cleaning tack

The day before the competition, clean and check all show tack.

- The tack should all be taken apart.
- Bits and stirrups removed and cleaned.
- Numnahs, saddlecloths, synthetic girths and boots washed.
- Leather boots cleaned the same as the tack.
- All leather work wiped down with a sponge and warm water.
- Clencher browbands and buckles clean well with the use of a toothbrush.
- Leather conditioner or saddle soap applied according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Tack put back together and to the correct fit for the horse (take a note of the buckle hole used for the cheek pieces, noseband etc when you take the tack apart).
- Cover velvet browbands to keep clean in transport.

Check tack

Most wear and tear on your tack occurs at the buckles or where the leather folds back in a loop such as where your bit connects to your bridle, so be sure to check for cracks and tears. Conditioning can help prevent leather from cracking, but it can't repair tack that is already damaged. If you find serious tears in your tack, it may be time to repair or replace it.

Tack and equipment

Stitching can also become worn, loose or rot.

Main places for leather wear and tear:-

- Cheek pieces where they attach to the bit.
- Reins where they attach to the bit.
- Stirrup leathers where they are threaded through the stirrup iron.
- Stirrup leather buckle holes where they can split with use.
- Girth straps where the buckle holes can split.

Main place for stitching damage:-

- Stirrup leathers
- Bridle parts

During and after the competition

On the day of the competition the tack may need a quick rub over once it is on the horse to remove any mess acquired when the horse has been warming up, in showing this is important. If the horse has more than one class and will be wearing the same tack again, it may need a quick wipe in between times to clean the bit and remove sweat or other marks from the leather.

The day after the competition

The tack should be cleaned as before and put away into the tackroom. Any repairs needed should be attended to now so that they are done in plenty of time for the next competition.

Other equipment required for competition

The equipment needed for the competition will vary according to the competition and how long the horse will be away for.

All necessary equipment should be checked for cleanliness if appropriate and state of repair well in advance of the competition. All consumable supplies such as feed and grooming sprays should be checked in plenty of time to ensure that you have enough time to get more supplies in if needed for the duration of the competition.

But in most cases for a competition of any kind with no overnight stay, you will always need to take the essentials as stated on the following page.

Tack and equipment

General essentials

Grooming kit



[Soft bristled "body" brushes](#) by BLW from Wikimedia under public domain

The grooming kit consists of:

- Curry comb
 - Body brushes
 - Hoof picks
 - Mane and tail brush
 - Mane comb
 - Hoof dressing
 - Detangler
 - Shine enhancer
 - Step stool
 - Fly spray
 - Bucket
 - Sponge
 - Sweat Scraper
-
- It is a good idea to have a grooming kit just for shows
 - Keep this all together in a suitable container
 - The grooming kit should be clean. No point in grooming the clean horse with dirty brushes.
 - Depending on the competition, you may have other items in the grooming kit.

Tack and equipment

Tack



[An older Stubben Tristan Dressage saddle](#) by BLW from Wikimedia [CC BY-SA 3.0](#)

Tack kit includes:

- Saddle
- Girth
- Numnah
- Bridle
- Martingale
- Boots

Additional kit that you may also take along:

- Rugs – will depend on the time of year, but a cooler is always handy.
- Protective gear for travelling – boots, tail bandage/guard, travel rug.
- Feed if required
- Haynet
- Buckets
- Water
- Electrolytes in paste form (syringe)

- Tack will vary according to the competition.
- Tack should be clean.
- Tack wipes or similar to give a once over if need be.
- Protect in travel with a saddle cover if you have one.
- Take spare reins, girth, stirrup leathers and head collar with rope.

Tack and equipment

Basic first aid kit for humans



[Just a normal first aid bag](#) by ProjectManhattan from Wikimedia [CC0](#)

Make sure basic first aid kit for humans is **clearly marked**. At most horse competitions there are first aiders on hand for more serious injuries or problems.

The first aid kit should include:

- Saline solution
- Sterile dressings
- Antiseptic wipes
- Plasters
- Bandages
- Scissors

Tack and equipment

Basic first aid kit for horses



[First Aid Sign/Label](#) from Wikimedia public domain

Make sure basic first aid kit for horses is **clearly marked**.

- Large roll of cotton wool
- Round-ended curved scissors for trimming hair from wound edges
- Anti-bacterial scrub eg Hibiscrub or Povidine
- Pack of sterile saline — very handy when on the move
- Ready-to-use poultice eg Animalintex, Poultex
- Non-stick dressings
- Gamgee and large scissors for cutting it to size
- Adhesive bandages
- A roll of electrical insulating tape 2cm wide
- A roll of black PVC tape or silver duct tape 7.5 or 10cm wide
- Antibiotic spray
- Wound cream such as 'Dermosil'
- Small pair of tweezers
- Thermometer
- Paper and pencil
- A bright torch for inspecting wounds in poor light

Tack and equipment

First aid kit for horses includes:

- Buffer
- Hammer
- Pincers
- Pliers

Other items

- Emergency Shoe removal kit – Although farriers are often in attendance at larger shows
- Show Details – classes entered and class order, times if possible, route, facilities available
- Riding hat - as you may have to go into the ring as 'groom', many shows state that a hard hat must be worn to enter the ring as assistant to the rider such as in a showing class.
- Horse Passports – essential
- Rule books
- Mobile phone
- Money
- Food



['Horse hoof care'](#) by Efraimstochter from Pixabay, CC0

Tack and equipment

Longer trips

For longer trips away, the same essentials stated in the previous page are required **plus**:

- Additional feed, supplements and forage
- Additional rugs depending on time of year
- Additional clean tail guards or bandages
- Extra numnahs/saddle cloths etc.
- Lungeing equipment
- Tack cleaning kit
- Spare set of horse shoes
- Trimmer for whiskers and stray hairs
- Horse washing supplies



[Horse wash](#) by the3cats from Pixabay, CC0

General supplies for stabling

- Baling twine
- Duct tape
- Stall guards
- Cable ties
- Hooks for hanging bridles
- Saddle racks

Tack and equipment

- Manure fork
- Shovel
- Broom
- Wheelbarrow or muck tubs
- Hose
- Padlocks
- Torch
- Batteries

Additional items required for washing the horse on longer trips.

- Shampoo
- Conditioner
- Detangler
- Sponges
- Sweat scraper
- Shine enhancer
- Towels for drying off

Additional list for specific competitions



[Trois types de crampons utilisés en équitation](#) by Maloq from Wikimedia [CC BY-SA 3.0](#)

Tack and equipment

Types of studs

Type	Description
Road studs	Used on hard surfaces, usually 4 or 6-sided, smaller in size and blunt. Can be used front or back, on the inside of the shoe or the outside. This type of stud is fine most of the time, unless the ground is incredibly muddy or slippery.
Blocks	Square in shape and best for soft, deep, muddy ground.
Bullets	Best for firm ground with a layer of soft ground on top. They are large and sharp.
Grass studs	Narrow and sharp to dig into hard, dry ground. They should only be used on the outside of the shoe, or just on the hind feet.
Olympic studs	Used for extremely slippery ground, very long and sharp.

Plaiting kit



[braided mane](#) by Jean from Wikimedia [CC BY 2.0](#)

The plaiting kit includes.

- Plaiting spray
- Plaiting comb
- Elastic bands

Tack and equipment

- Thread
- Needle
- Scissors
- Stool to stand on

Other items

- Quarter marker stencil
- Ice packs or leg cooling wraps to cool tendons
- Stable bandages to hold leg dressings in place
- Event grease for cross country
- Electrolytes in paste form (syringe)
- Appropriate tack – may also include stud guard, martingales or breastplates, ear protectors, coloured browbands, additional bridles /saddles as for eventing.
- Stud kit
- Boots



[Potential Olympic Competitor...](#) by Gilbertson from Wikimedia [CC BY-SA 2.0](#)

Tack and equipment

Endurance grooms

Endurance grooms will need to pack extra as the riders need to carry supplies with them on their horse in the pommel and cantle bags. Items such as:

- water for the rider;
- sponge so that the rider can wash the horse down in any streams etc to cool them en-route
- hoof pick
- ride card
- electrolyte for the horse in a syringe form
- snacks for the rider
- hoof boot if horse loses a shoe.

It is up to the rider what they carry except that it is mandatory that they carry a hoof boot and their ride card. They will not want to carry any unnecessary equipment as it adds to the weight which will ultimately affect the horse's performance.