

Saddle and Tack Care in Florida



Cleaning:

- Keep leather items that are under frequent use as clean as it is practical
- Saddle parts that are in contact with your horse's sweat can be cleaned after every use with a simple wipe down with a cloth
- Several times each year, saddles and bridles should receive thorough cleaning
- Disassemble pieces if you need to
- Each item can be scrubbed with a good liquid Glycerin saddle soap, a sponge or cloth, and adequate water
- Avoid submerging your saddle with a water hose
- Bar and cake soaps can build up in tooling and stitching, which can make it difficult to rinse clean
- When cleaning and oiling your saddle make sure your stirrup leathers loose (this will help prevent breakage)



- Step 1: Disassemble leather straps and pieces for proper cleaning
- Step 2: Scrub with a liquid Glycerin saddle soap, sponge/brush, & water
- Step 3: Use a water hose with light pressure to rinse away soap and dirt
- Step 4: Let saddle dry before applying oil or conditioner



Oiling:

- Leather cleaning removes oils from the leather and those essential oils must be replaced in order for the tack to remain flexible
- 100% pure neatsfoot oil is derived from livestock byproducts and is great to nourish leather products
- Disadvantages to using only neatsfoot oil is in humid environments mildew can appear on your saddle
- You can also use extra virgin olive oil to condition saddles
- Void using corn or vegetable oils because they tend to promote the growth of mold



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- Step 1: Make sure the leather items are dry after the cleaning process**
- Step 2: Oils will penetrate better if warmed**
- Step 3: Place your leather items in the sun to "warm up" prior to oiling**
- Step 4: Make sure you do not over oil your leather items if kept in high humidity**
- Step 5: Allow to dry after applying the oil**
- Step 6: Coat a finish to the leather (Conditioners or Lacquers)**
- Tip: One to two coats is sufficient enough**

Finishing

- **Lacquers do an excellent job of sealing and waterproofing**
- **Lacquers do an excellent job with preventing molds and mildews in southern climates**
- **Leather conditioners contain oil, natural waxes, and lanolin**
- **Leather conditioners enhance pliability, softness, and suppleness of the leather**
- **Apply with your finger tips and work into the leather**
- **After drying, any excess may be buffed with a soft cloth**



Storage

- **Heat and humidity are tack's enemies**
- **During summer months, try to store tack in an area where you can remove some of the moisture in the air**
- **A dehumidifier or an air conditioner will make for a drier environment**
- **Saddle covers help keep dust and dirt off of your saddles**

Safety

- **Check for stretched holes where you have buckles on your tack**
- **Check for loose hardware: Buckles, screws, and hooks**
- **Check for cracks in your leather: This typically happens where leather is under more stress**
- **Check for rusting, loose, or bent buckles**
- **Check your girth to make sure there aren't any signs of wear or tear**
- **Make sure to look at your stitching around buckles to ensure they aren't frayed**

Don't Forget

- **Dirty saddles may be "scrubbed" using saddle soap and water**
- **Cleaning suede with a stiff plastic brush will help remove dust and dirt**
- **Rough-out saddles should be cleaned the same way as tooled or smooth saddles**
- **Don't store saddles in hot and humid tack rooms**
- **Healthy leather in occasional use can and will harbor mold and mildew during humid weather**
- **Watch for mildew and mold and remove it if you see it on your tack**
- **Don't forget to perform a safety check on your tack while your cleaning your tack**

