

Security Blankets

By Dennis

Moreland

T

HERE ARE A LOT OF SADDLE pads on the market, and folks have lots of choices. I'll describe some of my favorite pads – and some of the things you should consider when deciding what to put underneath your saddle.

1. When you look at a hand-woven blanket, you want one that has some density to it and that is tightly woven, so that you can't poke your fingers through it. One hundred percent wool is always good. Pads like this may be expensive, but they're worth it. This particular pad is a "full blanket," meaning that it has two thicknesses, and it's more than 20 years old. A single blanket has only one thickness. Whichever thickness you go with, make sure the blanket has good wear leathers. These leather strips prevent the latigos and the back cinch from rubbing on the blanket and wearing through the fibers. If you break the warp threads, the blanket will come apart. The wear leathers must extend down below the edge of the blanket so that they do actually protect it.
2. This "Air-Ride" pad is made by AQHA Corporate Partner Professional's Choice, and it has an air-cell center for extra padding, shock absorption and breathability. It has a woven wool blanket on top with wear leathers.
3. This is a felt pad that has a piece of rubber sandwiched in between two pieces of felt to add extra cushion. It has a cutout over the withers to relieve pressure over the withers, which is real good on a high-withered horse, and it has a cutout for the cinches, which lets it lay closer to the horse's back.
4. This is a unique little pad for a horse that's round-backed and has trouble

keeping a saddle on. It has a synthetic chamois lining that you dampen and put that side next to the horse. Put a single blanket on top, and your saddle will not slip. Plus, you won't have to cinch your saddle too tight to prevent slippage, so your horse can be more comfortable.

Any of your pads are going to get coated with hair and sweat after time. You can simply curry them off, or if they really have a lot of buildup, you can let the blanket soak in some detergent water and then curry off the hair. If you do this, though, the main thing is to rinse the blanket well, maybe with a pressure washer, to get all the soap out. ■

AQHA member Dennis Moreland has been making quality working tack since 1976. Visit www.dmtack.com to learn more about his Dennis Moreland Second Edition line.

When choosing a saddle pad, quality and comfort are the key words.

