

Saddle Up and Move 'Em Out

By **Dennis**

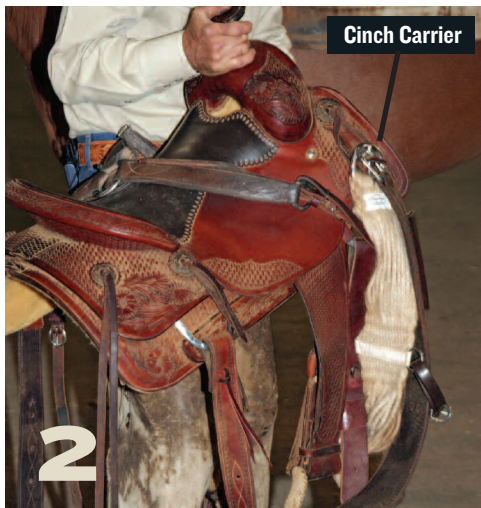
Moreland

IN ANYTHING YOU DO AROUND horses, it's always good to have a routine. For new horse owners, if you saddle your horse the same way every time, it'll reduce the chances of forgetting a step. Remember to groom your horse like we talked about in the last issue, and then follow these 10 simple steps:

1. Start by standing in front of the shoulder and swinging your saddle pad into the correct location. With time, you'll learn exactly where that is.



2. Have everything on your saddle set up correctly. I have the cinch and the flank, or back, cinch hooked to the cinch carrier on the right side of the saddle to keep



them from dragging on the ground. I have my breast collar, which is buckled onto the right side of the saddle, laying across the seat.

3. Standing in front of the shoulder, swing the saddle over your horse's back (don't drag the saddle pad) and lightly set the saddle into place.



4. It's important to raise up the saddle pad over the horse's withers so you've got a little breathing room there and the pad won't rub on the withers.



Stick with a routine, and you'll be more likely to saddle safely every time.

5. Go to the right side and release the cinches. If this is the first time to put this saddle on this particular horse, check the length of the front cinch by pushing it under the belly and seeing if its center is approximately in between the front legs.



6. Go to the left side and pull the front cinch across. Take the latigo and run it through the belly and seeing if its center is approximately in between the front legs.



Run it through the dee ring on the saddle from front to back and then back through the cinch ring. Tighten it by pulling up on the part of the latigo that stretches from the cinch to the dee ring. Be careful here, because if you tighten it too much at first, you can cause the horse to be "cinchy," where he complains about the saddling process. So to start with, I just make it snug, but not tight. I'll remember to tighten it more before I get on.

7. Next, I'll fasten the breast collar. It's already buckled on the right side of the saddle, so I'll pull it across and buckle the left side to the dee ring above the latigo.



If there's a bottom piece to the breast collar, remember to snap it to the ring on the front cinch between the front legs.

8. Still standing on the left side of the saddle, I'll reach under and pull the flank cinch across. I ride with this fairly close to the belly. As long as I'm not roping calves, it doesn't have to be pulled up tight, but I sure don't want it hanging down loose, either. That's asking for a tree limb or a gate latch or something similar to get hung in it. Be sure to put the billet of the flank cinch into its keeper.



Also, note that your flank cinch should be connected to your front cinch by a connector. This prevents the flank cinch from riding too far back.

9. Walk the horse off a few steps and then tighten the front cinch. Put the tongue of the cinch through a latigo hole, then put the tail of the latigo through the carrier.

10. Do a final once-over to ensure that everything is taken care of. Check the details, such as saddle strings that might have gotten caught underneath the saddle. □

Get Dennis Moreland's "Tack Talk" DVD at www.quarterhorseoutfitters.com. Price is \$9.95 for members, \$14.95 for nonmembers.

