


B

BEFORE WE START TALKING about saddling up, it's important to start with a clean slate: a horse that is free of mud, stickers or anything else that might interfere with the tack.

1. I like to start with a rubber currycomb. It loosens dead hair, and it's also good to take off caked-on mud. I start at the horse's head, and I don't spend much time on the mane with the rubber curry, but I do work down the legs, under the belly and just give the horse a good massage. If this is a horse I don't know, when I'm walking around to the other side, I stay in contact with the horse all the way around. If he knows I'm there, I won't startle him and possibly cause him to kick.
2. I like to follow up the currying with a good brushing. There are all types of brushes on the market, but I like a stiffer-bristled brush because it acts like a whisk broom to take off dirt and hair loosened by the curry. Again, I start at the head, spend a little more time on the mane and pay a lot of attention to the belly.
3. When I go to the mane and the tail with a hairbrush, I don't start at the top. Instead, I start at the bottom, very lightly working the little tangles out and getting the shavings out from the bottom first. You can gradually go up the mane and tail, getting the tangles out as you go. Now, if the horse is afraid of you and has his head in the air, you won't be combing his forelock. So this is where loving on your horse pays off. Speak softly around your horse and rub his head to get him used to your movements.
4. When I brush a horse's tail, especially a horse I don't know, I stand to the side as a safety measure.
5. Before I start saddling, I always feel of the belly to make sure everything is clean: no burrs, no mud. You can't see underneath the horse's belly, so it's important to rub it with your hands to make sure you haven't

A Clean Sweep

missed anything. And if you have gloves on, pull them off for this step – no matter how cold it is. 

By Dennis

Moreland

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.

Grooming is always the first step before tacking up.

