

Safety First

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CALL IT "GETTING IN A STORM."

It's what can happen if you're not paying attention around horses. You don't want to go there. Think on your feet, and keep your eyes open for anything that could put you and your horse in a dangerous situation. Here are some of the common problems I've seen:

1. Every time you saddle your horse, check your tack carefully. Your latigo is a particular trouble spot, because it takes a lot of wear. Check the top where it folds over the D ring to make sure it's not cracking. You want to make sure the holes are not elongated and there's no splitting there. The leather should be soft and pliable.
2. The same thing goes for bridling. You want to look over the headstall and reins and make sure everything is safe. See if your headstall is becoming worn around the buckle piece and if any of the holes are cracked or elongated. If your headstall has Chicago screws as fasteners, you'll want to pay close attention to them, because sometimes they can come undone. I like to put a drop of clear fingernail polish inside the screw hole to keep it tight.
3. Check the fastener on your reins, too. There may be Chicago screws here, too, or

string ties that should be checked for wear and cracking.

To keep your leather goods in good shape, use liquid saddle soap. And use the equipment. Equipment doesn't get in bad shape when it's being used; it gets in bad shape when it hangs in the barn.

4. My final safety tip doesn't have anything to do with tack, but it's something that people really need to be aware of. When you're opening gates from horseback, be aware of how the gate is built. Some have latches that do not have stops, meaning that as you are walking your horse through the gate, the latch rod will be sticking down in a very bad position. You can hang it on a breast collar, you can hang it on your stirrup, you can hang it on your flank cinch. Get it caught in your tack, and the wreck is on.

Just like with anything else with horses, it's your responsibility to stay aware and keep things safe. 🐾

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.

By Dennis

Moreland

Always be on the lookout for potential trouble spots.

