

FAIRFAX
SADDLES



MADE IN
ENGLAND



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Bridle Fitting Checklist

Whenever you are presented with a bridle and asked to 'check the fit' run through this list :

Start at the top and make sure that:

- The browband sits half way between the bottom of the ear and the bone above the horse's eye (*zygomatic arch*).
- You can easily get a finger under the point where the browband meets the headpiece.
- The wavy browband is shaped to follow the contours of the horse's head.
- The browband lies flat across the brow and you can run a finger under the browband with no tightness.

Throatlash & Cheeks

- The bottom of the throatlash falls halfway along the curve of the horse's cheekbone.
- All the buckles on the cheeks (*including throatlash*) are level with each other and should line up at eye level, avoiding the pressure zone close to where the browband meets the headpiece.
- The cheekpieces and noseband straps are all parallel. At no point should the cheekpieces of the bit or noseband duck under each other.
- Every component of the Performance Bridle is fastened on the same hole on each side of the horse's head.
- On a double bridle, check that the noseband and bradoon cheek are attached to the correct strap on the headpiece (*that they have not become swapped*).

Cavesson Noseband

- There is clearance between the bottom of the cheekbone and top of the noseband.
- Check for a gap between the jowl pad at the back and the actual noseband.
- When a cavesson is viewed side on, the ring on the noseband appears to sit half way across the side of the horse's face.
- The cheekpieces of a cavesson noseband run parallel to the edge of the horse's cheekbone.
- The jowl pad sits centrally and covers the horse's jawbones and the buckle lies centrally on the jowl pad.

Drop Noseband

- The pad of the noseband sits firmly on the bone, not below it.
- The short strap of a drop noseband sits at an angle and does not lie horizontally.
- The top ring of the noseband sits at the bottom of the cheekbone, in line with it.
- The lower strap sits below the bit (*not on it*) and all buckles & pads are away from the lips.

Grackle Noseband

- The top ring of the grackle sits on the flat part of the cheekbone, clear of the long edge and base of the cheekbone.
- The cheekpieces of the grackle lie parallel with the cheekpieces of the bit, with the grackle cheek buckles the same height as the bit cheek buckles.
- The top back pad is on the same hole both sides (*ideally hole 3*).
- The centre square is slid up as high as possible.
- The buckles of the bottom strap are on the same hole each side and are positioned about midway between the mouth and the centre square (*On an initial fit, fasten them closer to the mouth than the nose, because when the noseband beds in it will tighten a couple of holes*).

Headpiece fitting

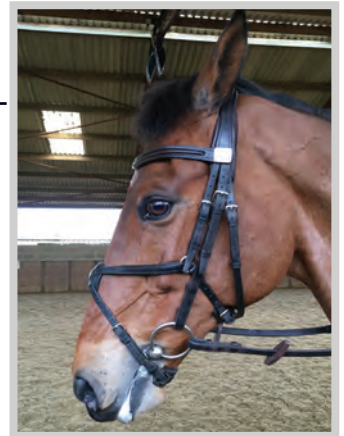
Fitting advice, solutions & troubleshooting

- ☑ Check this first – it will influence the fit of the rest of the bridle if it is wrong.
- ☑ On a correctly-sized headpiece, the browband should sit half way between the bottom of the ear and the bone above the horse's eye (*zygomatic arch*).
- ☑ It should be easy to get a finger under the point where the browband meets the headpiece.
- ☑ If the bridle has been taken apart at any point, it is worth checking that the headpiece has been put on the right way round! (the inset pic below right shows the headpiece on backwards)



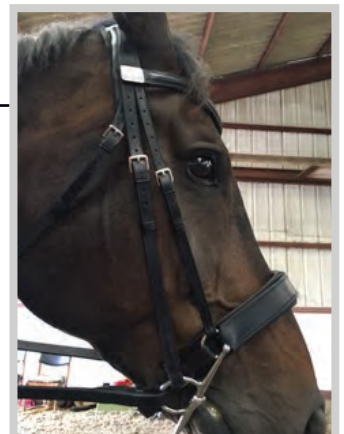
Headpiece too big

When the headpiece is too big, the browband sits too low and might even rest on the bone above the eye.



Headpiece too small

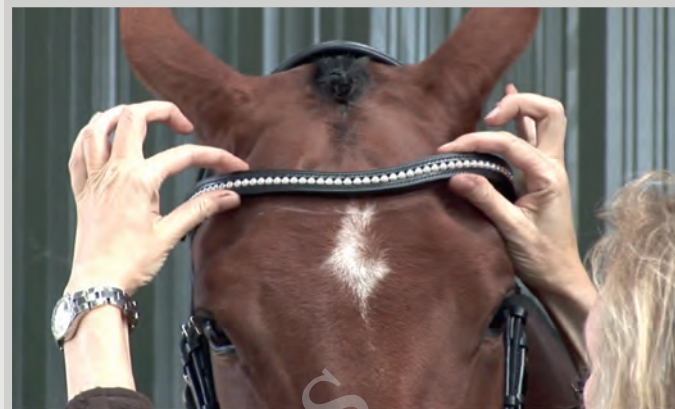
You can tell the headpiece is too small when the browband lies high up, close to the base of the ear.



Browband fitting

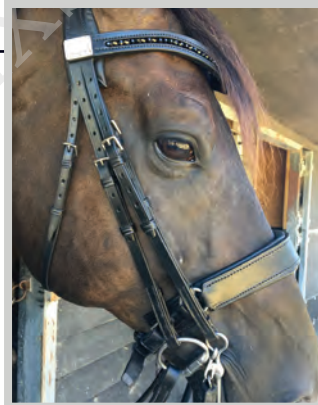
Fitting advice, solutions & troubleshooting

- ☑ Always check the browband – it can have an effect on the whole fit of the rest of the bridle.
- ☑ It is essential that the wavy browband is shaped to follow the contours of the horse's head.
- ☑ It should lie flat across the brow.
- ☑ It's not necessary to have a huge gap under the browband and it may touch the face. However, you should be able to comfortably run a finger under the browband with no tightness.



Browband too big

Here the browband is sitting way too far from the horse's face and sticking off the front of the horse's head.



Browband too small

Here are two examples of browbands that are too small – they are pulling the headpiece forward, into the back of the horse's ears, and could lead you to suspect the headpiece is too small.

On the bay horse you can see the cheekpieces of the noseband are also being pulled forward of the cheekbone, towards the eye.

Once a bigger browband is fitted, double check the headpiece is in fact the right size by making sure there's room for a finger under the point where it meets the browband and that the browband is lying in the correct position between the ear and bone above the eye.



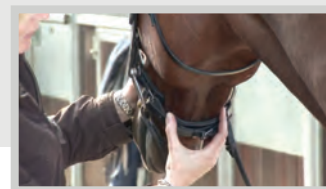
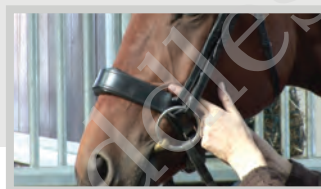
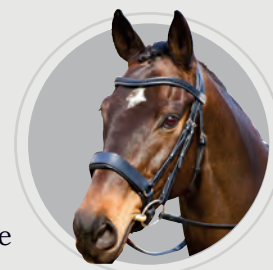
Cavesson noseband fitting

Fitting advice, solutions & troubleshooting

- ☑ There must be clearance between the bottom of the cheekbone and top of the noseband (see pic middle right and diagram). This is to ensure the noseband avoids the sensitive artery and vein in this area.
- ☑ There should be a gap between the jowl pad and the actual noseband.
- ☑ When viewed side on, the ring on the noseband should appear to sit half way across the side of the horse's face.
- ☑ The cheekpieces of the noseband should run parallel to the edge of the horse's cheekbone.
- ☑ To fit, hold the noseband so that the padding is central on the nasal bone. Do up the strap at the back, ensuring there is clearance either side of the nasal bone.

- ☑ When the strap is tightened, make sure the jowl pad at the back sits centrally and covers the horse's jawbones (pic bottom right).

- ☑ The buckle must lie on the jowl pad, as close to the centre as possible. Choose a jowl strap that initially fastens on the second hole from the pointed end – so that there is very little excess strap sticking out of the buckle. This is because the jowl strap will bed in with use and will eventually fasten nicely on the middle hole.



Cavesson noseband too big

The large noseband she is wearing is too big for this mare.

The cheekpieces of the noseband are sitting behind the edge of the cheekbone.

On the side view, you can see that the ring on the noseband sits lower than half way across the horse's face.

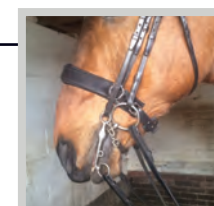
On the close up view, you can see there is no gap between the noseband and the jowl pad, plus the buckle is on the second-to last hole and left of centre.



Cavesson noseband too small

The ring of the noseband is being pulled forward under the weymouth cheekpiece.

There is not enough room to get a finger right down each side beside his nose bone.



Jowl strap too long

Here you can see the cavesson jowl strap is way too long (there's lots of spare strap). You can't see on the pic, but it won't be buckling centrally.

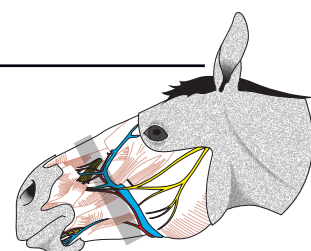
If the jowl pad is not positioned centrally, or the jowl strap is too long, the noseband may spin when tightened.

Also, there's not enough gap between the jowl pad and the noseband.



Cavesson too high

It is important to ensure you have clearance between the bottom of the cheekbone and the top of the cavesson noseband. A noseband that is fitted too high will interfere with the sensitive facial and vein that run just below the cheekpiece. Our testing shows this can lead to a reduction in performance.



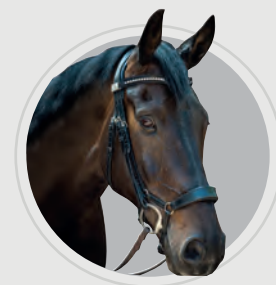
Drop noseband fitting

Fitting advice, solutions & troubleshooting

- ☑ The pad of the noseband should sit firmly on the bone, not below it.
- ☑ To fit, fasten the top strap loosely first, then do up the bottom strap. Tighten top strap if necessary. DO NOT fasten the top strap tightly to start with.
- ☑ The short connecting strap between the two rings of the noseband should sit at an angle and should not lie horizontally.
- ☑ The cheekpieces of the noseband should lie parallel to the cheekpieces of the bit.

- ☑ The top ring of the noseband should not duck back below the bit cheekpiece. It should sit at the bottom of the cheekbone, in line with it.

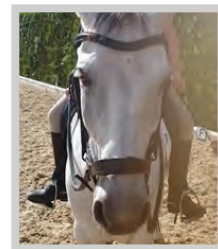
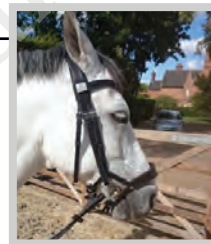
- ☑ The lower strap should sit below the bit – not on it.
- ☑ All buckles and pads should be away from the lips.



Drop noseband too big

The pony has standard bridle on in the photo and although all the cheekpiece buckles are lining up, the noseband is sitting way too low – it's too big.

This pony needs a fine noseband.



Drop not adjusted properly

Here, the top strap of the drop noseband is too tight and is pulling the cheekpiece of the noseband & top ring too far back.

The connecting strap between the rings is pulled too 'flat'.

The cheekpieces of the drop need to lie parallel to the cheekpieces of the bit. So fasten the top strap loosely, then adjust the lower one into position before tightening the upper one if necessary.



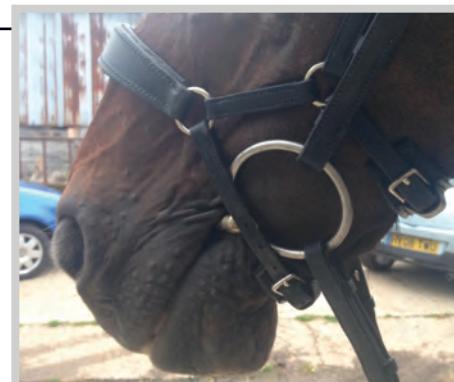
Drop rubbing

If the top strap is too tight and the top ring of the noseband is being pulled too far back, the bottom strap won't sit correctly and may cause rubbing.

Here, the top strap has been fastened too tightly and the bottom strap is sitting on top of the bit, causing skin to wrinkle and rub.

Also, the noseband cheekpieces need dropping one hole to allow the bottom strap to sit under the bit.

If the rub is on one side only, check the straps are all done up on the same hole and the bit is sitting equally in the mouth.



Grackle fitting

Fitting advice, solutions & troubleshooting

- ☑ The top ring needs to sit on the flat part of the cheek, clear of the base (with the grackle cheekpiece buckles the same height as the bit cheekpiece buckles)
- ☑ The top ring needs to be clear of the long edge of the cheekbone, so the cheekpieces of the grackle lie parallel with the bit cheekpieces.
- ☑ The top back pad should be on the same hole both sides (ideally hole 3).
- ☑ The centre square should be slid as high up the nose as possible.
- ☑ Set the bottom strap on the same hole both sides with the buckles initially positioned almost midway between the mouth and the centre square (but closer to the mouth than the nose because when the noseband beds in it will tighten a couple of holes).
- ☑ The pad on the lower strap should sit centrally in the chin groove.



Grackle too low

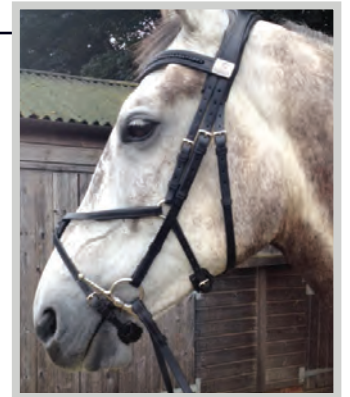
The most common grackle problem is a noseband fitted too low.

Here, the noseband cheekpieces are fastened too low. They should be lined up with the buckles of the cheekpieces.

The cheekpieces of the noseband are ducking back under the cheekpieces of the bit – they should lie parallel.

The front pad is sitting too low & needs to be slid higher (*until the cheek straps are parallel to the bit cheeks*).

Then slacken the back pad at the top and tighten the bottom strap, ensuring that the buckle is not fastened too close to the lip.



Throatlash fitting

Fitting advice, solutions & troubleshooting

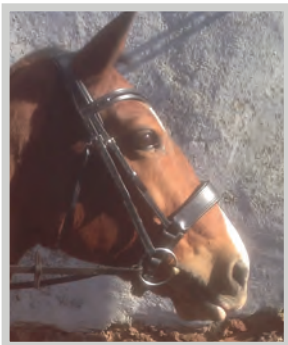
- ☑ The bottom of the throatlash should fall halfway along the curve of the horse's cheekbone.
- ☑ The buckle should line up with the cheekpieces and noseband buckles.



Cheekpieces fitting

Fitting advice, solutions & troubleshooting

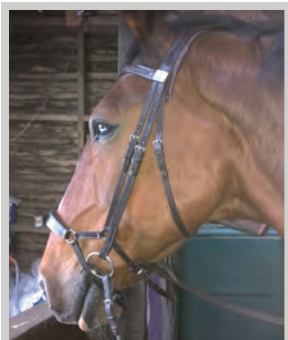
- ☑ All the buckles on the cheeks should ideally be level with each other and should line up at eye level, avoiding the pressure zone close to where the browband meets the headpiece.
- ☑ The bit cheekpieces and noseband cheekpieces should always be parallel. At no point should the cheekpieces or noseband straps be ducking under each other.
- ☑ Every component of the Performance Bridle fastens on both sides. Fasten all buckles on the same hole on each side of the horse's head.



Cheekpieces too long

The pony has standard bridle on in the photo and although all the cheekpiece buckles are lining up, the noseband is sitting way too low – it's too big.

This pony needs a fine noseband.



Cheekpieces too short

If the top strap is too tight and the top ring of the noseband is being pulled too far back, the bottom strap won't sit correctly and may cause rubbing.

Here, the top strap has been fastened too tightly and the bottom strap is sitting on top of the bit, causing skin to wrinkle and rub.

Also, the noseband cheekpieces need dropping one hole to allow the bottom strap to sit under the bit.

If the rub is on one side only, check the straps are all done up on the same hole and the bit is sitting equally in the mouth.



1. Snaffle / Bradoon
2. Noseband
3. Weymouth / Curb

Double bridle cheekpieces

☑ On a double bridle, check that the noseband and bradoon cheekpieces are attached to the correct strap on the headpiece.

☑ The straps on a Double Fairfax Performance bridle headpiece are equally balanced front and back, with the noseband being the centre strap.

☑ The longer cheekpiece should be attached to the front strap on the headpiece (in order to accommodate the smaller ring of the weymouth)



Asymmetry

Fitting advice, solutions & troubleshooting

- ☑ Although ideally we'd want all bridle components buckled on the same hole each side, sometimes the bridle just doesn't sit square or look right. Fitting a Fairfax Performance Bridle could be the first time anyone has paid attention to the symmetry of the horse's head.
- ☑ If this is the case, remove the bridle from the horse's head.
- ☑ Double check all buckles are fastened symmetrically and hold it on your finger at the centre of the headpiece.
- ☑ If everything lines up and hangs correctly – the bridle is symmetrical.
- ☑ It is therefore likely that the horse's head isn't.

Bridle not sitting correctly

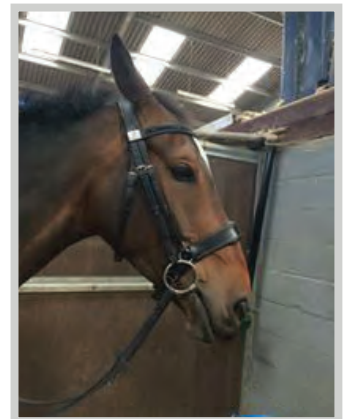
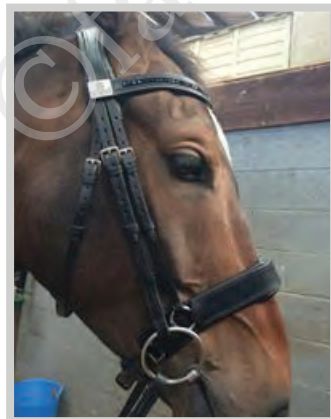
Although the white facial marking doesn't help it is still easy to see that the bridle isn't sitting squarely on the horse's head.

Despite buckling on the same hole, the bit is sitting lower one side than the other.

The browband is not horizontal. Viewed from the side you can see it is higher on the horse's left side.

After consultation with the owner, it was discovered the horse suffered a transit injury to the left side of its head which has left a significant 'bump' below the ear.

In this situation of asymmetry, drop the cheekpiece on one side until the bit is level in the horse's mouth. Then adjust the remaining elements/buckles based around a level bit.



FAIRFAX

SADDLES



Snaffle Cavesson
Size: Fine, Standard,
Large, X-Large



**Narrow Snaffle
Cavesson**
Size: Standard, Large



Snaffle Drop
Size: Pony, Fine,
Standard, Large



Snaffle Grackle
Size: Fine, Standard,
Large



Snaffle Flash
Size: Standard, Large,
X-Large
Not available in narrow