

## Saddle Fit Tip of the Month by Debbie Witty

### How to create more consistency with the fit of your saddle

In order to have your saddle fit more consistently you need to limit your variables.

For your horse:

**Weight** – Compare a horse's weight fluctuations and the fit of the saddle, with how your clothing fits after you gain or lose 10 pounds. When you consider that the difference between the tree widths is approximately  $\frac{1}{2}$  of an inch plus the changes that can be made in the flocking, that is all of the adjustability that you have. Make yourself aware of changes in diet and how it affects your horse's body.

**Fitness**- The way the saddle fits according to the level of fitness goes hand in hand with what happens with weight changes. Keeping your horse in consistent work is a critical part of your formula for successful fitting saddle. A horse will lose total fitness in approximately three weeks of time off. It is hard to believe that all of your hard work can go by the wayside that quickly, but it is true according to blood chemistry analysis and heart rate recoveries as well as several other physiological parameters. So, if you purchase a new horse or your horse has been out of work for a period of time and you are considering purchasing a new saddle, try to create a level of fitness that will be a more accurate measurement of what your horse's body is like when he is fit. To build this level of fitness lunge, borrow a saddle, ride bareback do anything you can to make your horse fit.

Next we will give you more information on how to keep you saddle fitting its best.