

Sensation Saddle FAQs

1. Q. Why do some people call this saddle a "pad" ?

A. The Sensation™ saddles started out as a bareback pad with support and has developed from there. The name has stuck. And now they are called treeless saddles.

2. Q. How much does the Sensation Ride™ saddles cost?

A. The standard Sensation English Trail Ride™ currently sells from \$975.00 CAD. Custom models are slightly more depending on the features selected.

3. Q. What Styles are available?

A. We are producing a standard English Trail, Dressage Trail, Dressage and Hybrid Trail Sensation Ride™ saddles and plan to offer other styles in the future.

4. Q. Can I put saddle, cantle and pommel bags on?

A. Yes. Standard nylon trail bags mate well.

5. Q. What sizes does the Sensation come in?

A. The Sensation Ride™ has a standard adult size - the equivalent of a 15.5" western seat and a 17 to 17 1/2" seat. The use of seat bolsters which fit inside the saddle at the pommel and or cantle bolsters (see Features and Functions at the top of the web page) can create a smaller fit.

6. Is there a break-in period?

A. There is a very short break-in period for the Sensation Ride™ saddles which allows the inner materials to conform to you and your horse.

7. Q. What is the proper way to mount the saddle - can you mount from the ground?

A. Although we advise riders to mount from blocks and from both sides for the benefit of the horse's spine, the Sensation Ride™ can be mounted from the ground once it is "broke-in" This is a very individual thing. If you have problems mounting in a treed saddle you will probably have problems mounting from the ground onto the saddle.

Most people find the saddle does not slip when mounting IF the saddle is properly tightened. However, your personal mounting technique and the shape of your horse can make a difference in whether or not the saddle slips when mounting.

Mount by facing squarely to your horse's side. With one hand on the mane of the horse, mount up. As you, do be sure to arch over the horse's back rather than going straight up like a pogo stick. As you rise over the saddle, grab the cantle, putting counter pressure on the cantle to further stabilize it. This is also more comfortable for your horse.

For safety, we recommend using an English breastplate with a wither strap. If for instance, your horse should stop and spin suddenly, the saddle could slip, if not tightened correctly, but the wither strap will keep the saddle from going completely off the side of the horse. The wither strap provides a catch point.

8. Q. In what disciplines have riders used the Sensation Ride™?

A. Riders are using their Sensation Ride™ for trail, pleasure, endurance, dressage, jumping, hippo-therapy, on gaited horses, draft horses, mules & children's ponies.

9. Q. Can I use it directly on my horse?

A. The Sensation Ride™ is not meant to be placed directly on the back of the horse. A good quality saddle pad should be used under the saddle to protect your pad from sweat and grime.

10. Q. Can I use it on many different horses?

A. Yes. This saddle conforms nicely to many shapes and sizes. It will fit the broadest of any horse but it is not designed for high withered horses. It is a best fit for horses with medium to low withers.

11. Q. What gives this "pad" stability?

A. The "butterfly" aka weight distribution insert, as well as the large area which the rigging is distributed both aid in keeping the saddle stable. There are no hard inserts which can limit the pad's fit.

12. Q. Will I need to use a crupper & breastplate to keep it from sliding?

A. We recommend breastplates on saddles as a general rule - for safety, but whether or not a crupper will be required will largely depend on your riding style, your horse's build and the terrain you ride on.

13. Q. Any other things that I might notice in my horse & my riding?

A. If your horse has had restriction from treed saddles in the past, your horse may show some extra energy. You may notice some muscle soreness for the first few rides until your body adjusts to the change in your center of balance and different seat feeling.

14. Q. My horse has a very short back, will this saddle be too long on him?

A. The "footprint" or of the saddle is about 19". This should accommodate very short backed horses.

15. Q. I was wondering why this saddle isn't recommended for folks over 200 lbs? *This answer came from Dana at Nickers Saddlery LTD. designer & manufacturer of the Sensation Ride™ saddle.*

A. The materials in the Sensation saddles, such as the rigging straps and other nylon components are rated for far more strength than is needed for the saddle. Actually, they tested capable up to 1200 pounds. But the way that everything is shaped can be compromised by a heavier rider.

It is sort of like the way snow skis are arched for bounce, the SR saddles are rated only for a certain weight of user or they lose their "spring" or "bounce". The felts and foams in the saddle maintain their loft and comfort for riders under 200 pounds very well. A rider over 200 lbs would put extra wear and tear on the components of the saddle.

If a rider over 200 pounds was not riding a suitably larger horse I would also worry about the horse carrying the load in the treeless if the horse had previously been carrying that rider in a treed saddle. It is entirely up to you.

The saddle won't fall apart or anything, but we do not have any testing to show results on a rider over 200 lbs.

A treeless saddle tends to require a horse and rider to use muscles that they do not fully use while in a treed saddle. This is one reason you will often see horses ridden in a treeless saddle with large withers and bulky muscles behind their scapulas. Transitioning over to full-time riding in a treeless should be gradual if a rider expects to ride a lot.

16. Q. Customer recommendations: Can you give me some recommendations of people I can call who are satisfied customers?

A. Yes, if you call or email me I will get you in contact with other customers. Another good place to ask questions is on the Yahoo Treeless Saddle Group - <http://sports.groups.yahoo.com/group/treeless saddles/>

17. Q: What are the main differences between Nickers Sensation Ride™ saddles and Bob Marshalls Sports Saddles?

A: Both the Sports Saddles and the Sensation are great saddles. The choice really comes down to how you want to ride and what the conformation of your horse is. The Sensation Saddle is made for the widest of any horse whereas the Sport Saddle does not always fit well on the very broad shouldered horses, due to the hard pommel. There is nothing at all hard in the Sensation Saddle so shoulder freedom is maximized.

There are other differences between the Sensation Saddle and the Sports Saddle. One significant difference is the ability to move the stirrups forward or backward to accommodate the balance of the rider's body. All Sensation Saddles have adjustable stirrup placement. The stirrups of the Sports Saddles are fixed in one place. The Sensation is great in that you can adjust the stirrups forward and back and choose between the hard use and the free swing stirrup mode. The free swing will be necessary especially for short legged riders.

The other difference I find when I ride the Sensation Saddle is the degree of leg contact. The Sports Saddle is made of neoprene which does tends to spread your legs out more than the Sensation Saddle. The Sensation Saddle has a twist in the saddle allows you to get more leg contact.

The Sensation will feel more like a treed English saddle where leg contact is concerned. In the Sports Saddle you can feel the horses back muscles move under you but in the Sensation you cannot. The Sensation saddle has a built in gullet which adds more thickness under your seat.

The weight of the Sensation saddle is about 6 lbs and the lightest adult Sports Saddle Endurance model is about 12 lbs. The length of the Sensation is about 19" whereas the Sports Saddle, starting with a 15" seat, will start at about 25" in length. The Skito pad can be made for both models. This is a great pad.

More FAQs

Sensation Ride™ English Treeless Saddles - Construction

1. Q. Will the stirrups bog down on the horses back - as with some other treeless saddles?

A. We use a multi-point attachment system to maximize weight distribution over the entire pad from the rigging and stirrups. There is also a flexible weight distributing insert of Orthotic grade plastic within the pad which aids in preventing bogging in prone areas.

2. Q. Does the Sensation Ride™ saddle provide spine and wither clearance?

A. When properly fitted and mated to the correct pad you will find a surprising amount of spinal clearance on your horses' back. Wither clearance is present but minimal on some horses. However, this is not so much of an issue as it would be with a treed saddle because it contains only soft materials next to the horse.

3. Q. Why are there so many different layers of material?

A. We have carefully chosen materials for breath-ability, shock absorption and durability. The Sensation Ride™ has been designed with the sandwich concept in mind. One side which is ideal for the horses' comfort, one side ideal to the rider and a buffer zone in the middle. We are believers in natural / breathable materials wherever possible.

4. Q. Are there adjustable components on the Sensation Ride™?

A. A surprising number of components are adjustable and/or replaceable

- The stirrups may be adjusted fore and aft
- The seat can be bolstered in the front, rear or center
- The weight distribution piece may be moved to accommodate your horses' back shape
- The cantle may be reduced
- The knee blocks may be moved or removed.