

Features of a well designed and fitted bridle

Browband

- Does not touch base of ears or prominences on head
- Long enough that headpiece is not pulled onto back of ears
- Browband-headpiece junction minimises pressure over temporomandibular (jaw) joint

Noseband (all designs)

- Headstrap does not run under or through headpiece
- Has side ring
- Wide enough to distribute pressure
- Padded to relieve pressure on front of nose and back of jaw
- Buckle does not sit over back of the jaw
- Buckles to headpiece level with eye
- Height adjusted so that noseband does not interfere with bit or bottom of facial crest, or compress nostrils
- Tight enough to be stable, but loose enough to fit two adult fingers between noseband and front of nose (see picture above)
 - This applies to all types of noseband



Principles of good bridle design and fit

- **Minimise pressure**
- **Maximise stability**
- **Consider the horse's individual head shape**



Headpiece

- Padded and expanded over poll to reduce pressure and increase stability; no buckles on top of head
- Shaped and padded to reduce pressure on back of ear and wing of atlas
- Padded around temporomandibular (jaw) joint to reduce pressure when horse swallows or moves its mouth, tongue, head, neck, or front legs
- Top of split in headpiece sits below browband attachment

Throat lash

- Lowest part of throat lash approx. half way along cheek; 4 adult fingers fit horizontally between cheek and throat lash

Cheek Piece

- Lies behind facial crest
- Buckle level with eye

Bit

- Correct width
- Correct height
- Shape suits horse's mouth shape and tongue size, and does not impact on roof of mouth or bars

Additional points

- Provide regular dental care
- If a fly hood or ear bonnet is used, ensure that:
 - This is considered when the bridle is fitted
 - No pressure points are created
- Keep all leather soft



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