TheraShims™

You need to use *TheraShims* when...

- Your horse is downhill or hollow-backed.
- Your horse has atrophied back or shoulder muscles.
- Your saddle is too narrow for the horse.
- Your saddle sits 'downhill,' dropping lower at the front, preventing you from accessing your Balance Point and putting more weight on the horse's forehand.

Correct Saddle Positon

Western Saddle

The seat needs to be the lowest part "L" of the saddle to allow the rider to access their Balance Point. In many western saddles the seat is artificially built up in front to help the rider do this, however the bars still exert downward pressure behind or on the horse's scapula.

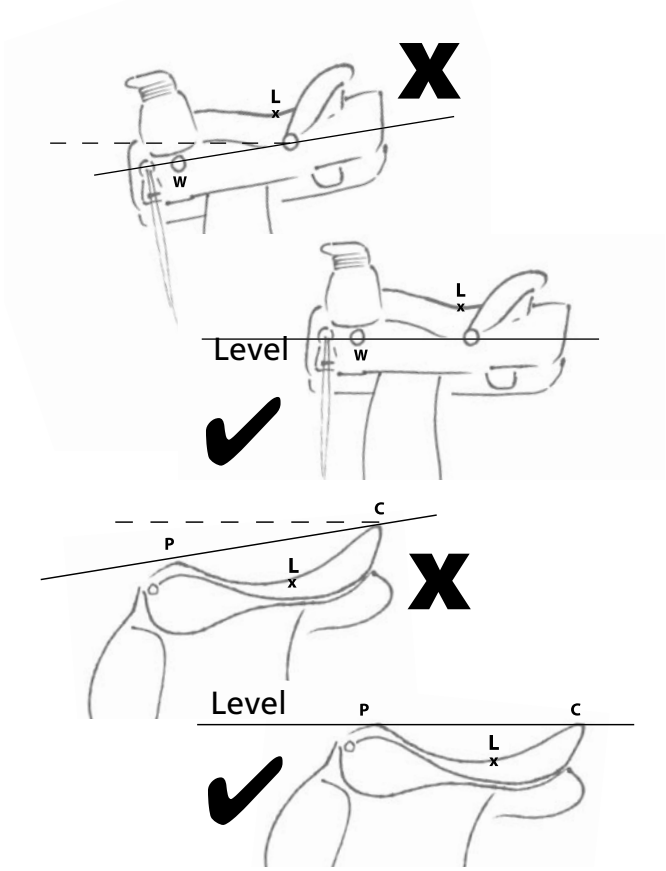
Use shims to raise the front of the saddle and check the "rivet" points as shown to know if it is level to the ground. The rivet usually indicates the first weight 'W' bearing point of the tree or bars. The front rivet is generally located at the base of the fork.

English Saddle

The lowest part of the seat 'L' is often towards the middle or "waist" rather than at the back of the seat. This tends to throw the rider on their crotch and prevent them from accessing their Balance Point and therefore shifting weight to the hind end of the horse.

When placing shims under the saddle, look for when the lowest part of the seat changes to the back. At this time the pommel 'P' and cantle 'C' are usually level and by pushing downward on them there is no rocking motion. If you can rock the saddle front to back it indicates a need for more shim at the front.

Some English saddles also have rivets with which to help guide you. Make sure they are parallel to the ground and even a little uphill.



Determining how many TheraShims are required to balance your saddle

1. Mark your horse's scapula range of motion. Use an 'F' for the forward position and a 'B' for the maximum backward position.
2. Place your saddle on the horse's back without a pad.
3. Make sure the first weight bearing part of the saddle tree is on or slightly behind mark 'B' of the scapula.
4. Lift the saddle and place TheraShims under the first weight bearing part until the lowest part of the seat is at the back of the seat (until the saddle is level, see diagrams). This will help you determine how many shims are required. Many horses require between two and four shims in order to get the saddle position right. (Two thin TheraShims = $1\frac{1}{2}$ thick TheraShim)
5. The air in the Theraflex pad can play a powerful role too when shimming. There's no need to fully compensate with just shims. Horses with a lot of atrophy behind the scapula or who are thin will need more air in the Theraflex pad than other horses.

Note: When first placing the saddle on the shimmed Theraflex Pad, it may appear that the seat is not low in the right place. This is because air under the seat will displace forward once the rider is seated. Until then there will be a little too much air in the back part. Trust that you have inserted the right amount of shims to level your saddle as per previous instructions. You'll know as soon as you ride and try to find your Balance Point if you've shimmed correctly. And if you're not sure, try adding/removing shims! If it feels better you'll know it was the right thing.

For even more information on shiming and your Balance Point, review the following references: Level 2 Program—DVD 1 Chapter 4; DVD 5 Chapters 4, 5 & 6. Savvy Times article, The Pros and Cons of Saddling *(Issue 6, January 2005, article can also be found on Savvy Club website if you are a member).*

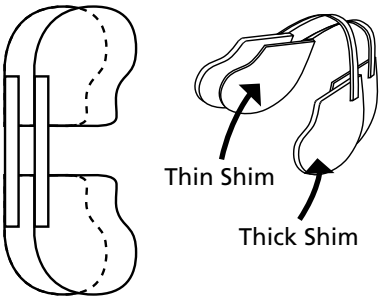
TheraShims™

Creating Different Configurations with *TheraShims*

Shoulder Shim

These are used to lift the front of the saddle, to level the saddle or to give more room to the shoulders of the horse. When using more than one shim it is necessary to layer or stagger them. There are two thicknesses to allow you to shim your horse as accurately as possible. Use them individually or in combinations.

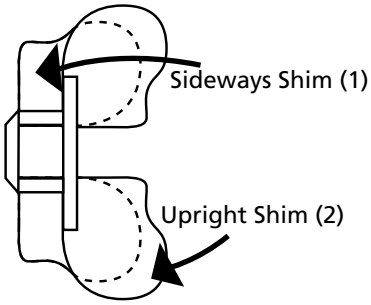
When combining shims, layer them from back to front. This puts the front shim on the top and creates a space under it, giving maximum freedom for the shoulders.



Wedge Shim

This is used when you have to shim a longer area along the back, or when having to use two thick shims or more. It creates more thickness at the front and tapers to the back.

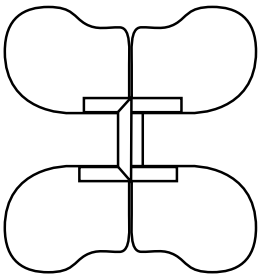
Create the wedge with two shims, one upright and the other laying sideways. Place the sideways shim(1) in first, then the upright shim(2) at the front of the pad and on top of the first shim.



Center Shim

Center shims are required to stop the saddle from 'bridging' the back and creating pressure at each end of the bars. They lift the saddle and rider up to the ideal back position for the horse. Center shims fill the hollow area and taper at each end.

To place shims in the center for a hollow back horse, simply turn them sideways and back to back as shown. You can use thick or thin or both as needed. If requiring additional height in the center, trim another shim as needed to fit on top.



How to Shim for different back types

Back Type 1: High Whithers or Rounded Shoulders

- Shoulder shims
- or Wedge

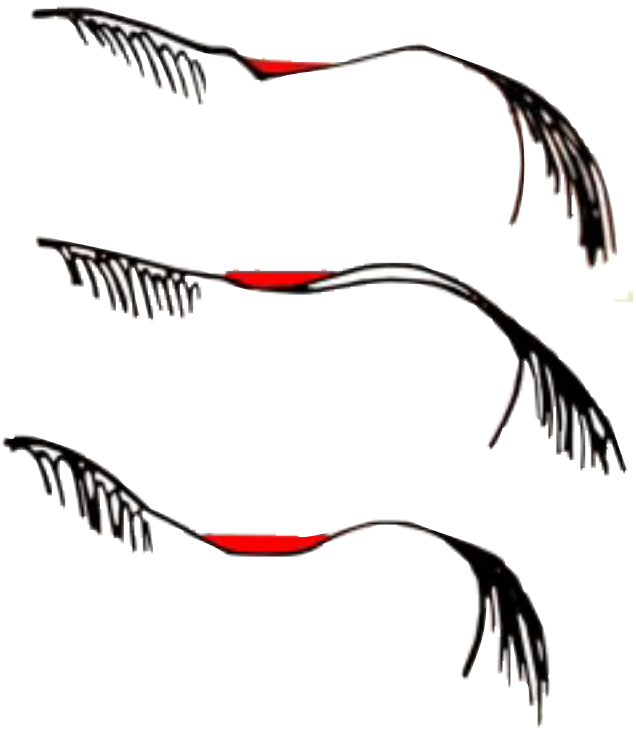
Back Type 2: Flat

No shims needed unless horse has downhill posture , or the saddle is too narrow:

- If downhill, use 1-2 shoulder shims
- If saddle is too narrow, or more than 2 thick shims are needed create wedge shim

Back Type 3: Hollow or Sway back

- Center shims
- Add shoulder shims if horse is downhill



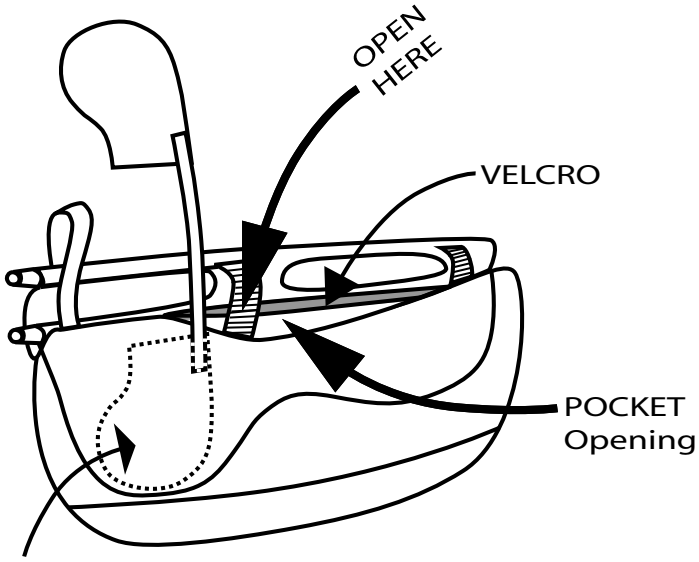
TheraShims™

Calculate the number and configuration of *TheraShims* you need according to...

- What it takes to balance your saddle...have the bars level with the ground or even slightly 'uphill'.
- Your horse's back type.

Inserting the *TheraShims* into the *Theraflex Pad*

Position the shims in Theraflex pad according to your horse's back type and in the area where your horse's back is dipped or where the saddle doesn't fit properly.



PLACE SHIMS on
TOP of AIRCELL
INSIDE the POCKET

Remember that you may need to change the configuration and how many shims when...

- Your horse's muscling improves. Approximately 8-12 weeks
- Your horse's back changes "type." (example: a Back Type 3 becomes a Back Type 2).

Note: If your saddle is too narrow for the horse, you will always need shims in order to lift and widen it.

Warning...

If too many shims are used in the shoulder area, be careful that you don't tip the saddle up to the extent that it puts pressure at the back of the bars on the horse's loins or spine. This is an improperly shimmed and unbalanced saddle position. It will cause the horse to be uncomfortable and may even cause pressure sores or abrasion. Check that you are shimming appropriately for your horse's back type, in extreme situations you may need to put a shim at the back or create a long Wedge.

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