



BALANCE

‘CONSTRUCTIVE SADDLING’

**For the maintenance and recovery of healthy & natural
Movement, Power & Self Expression in the Ridden Horse.**



THE BALANCE APPROACH TO 'CONSTRUCTIVE SADDLING'

WHEN WE CLIMB ONTO THE HORSE'S BACK, WE CHANGE HIS LIFE.

The impact of carrying the unnatural weight of a rider creates many stresses on his body, limbs and feet. His willingness to co-operate in this 'thing' that we call riding, has been a gift to mankind for centuries. In fact, the horse has changed human history by transporting us to places, and in ways, that we could never have accomplished on our own two feet! **Through much of our history**, the horse has simply been a beast of burden, a means of transport and used much as a tractor would be used in farming environments. In all of these roles, his own comfort, well-being and right to self expression have tended to be low down on the list of priorities for the people who handle, ride and train him. It is true that even in the 21st. Century, there are some parts of the world where the horse is still used much like a piece of machinery, but for the majority of horses in the Western world, the role they play in our lives is very different.

HORSES HAVE BECOME A SOURCE OF ENTERTAINMENT AND LEISURE.

They participate in competitive sport of all kinds. They provided pleasure to countless numbers of people who enjoy their company and enjoy being transported through their particular area of countryside on the back of a horse. They provided opportunities for people to come together in groups and networks of friends who enjoy similar past-times. They create around them, many forms of employment including: farriers, trainers, veterinarians, therapists, barn builders, arena builders, website builders, saddlers, magazine and book publishers etc. **At the core of all of this industry, enjoyment and entertainment is.....the Horse.** Unchanged in his physical, mental and emotional needs for centuries, but encouraged and sometimes forced to adapt and accept the ways in which humans want him to be.

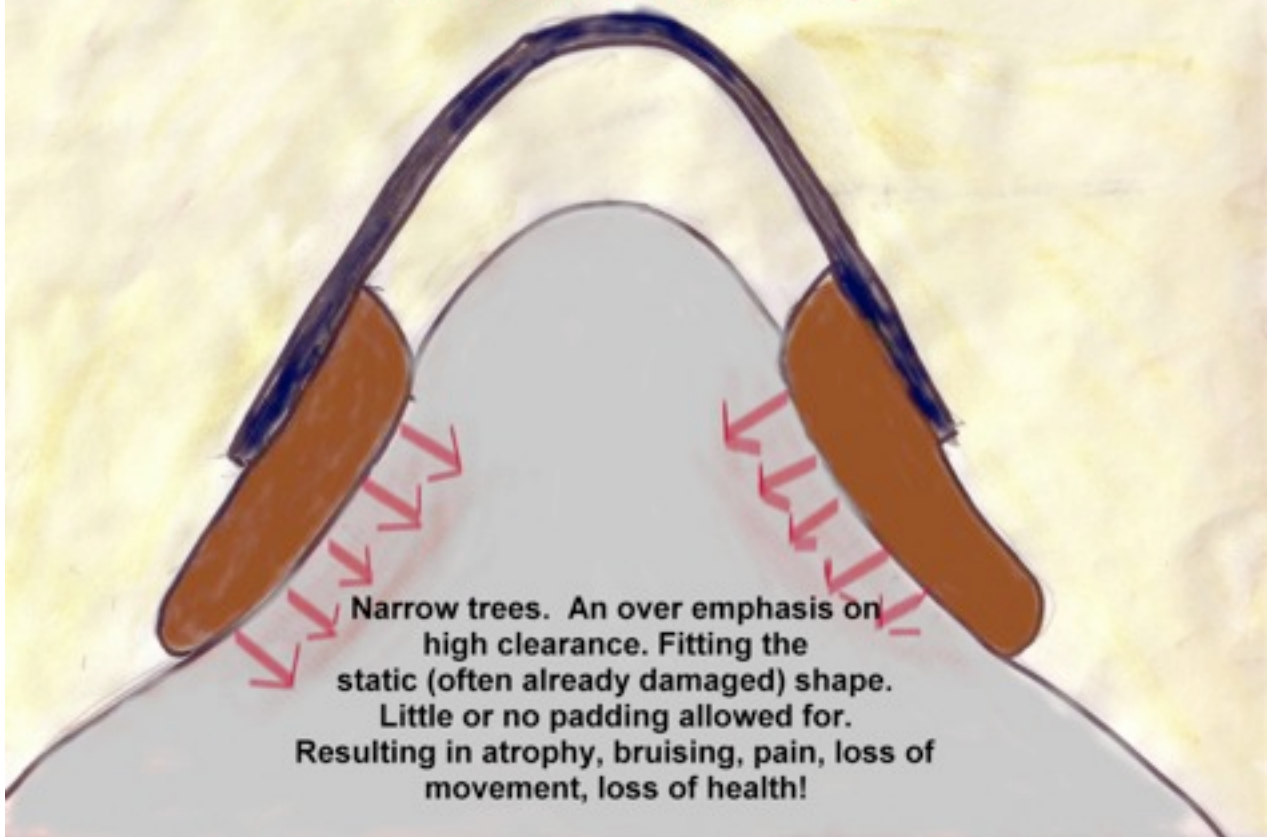
THE BALANCE APPROACH TO THE CARE, TRAINING AND RIDING OF HORSES

This approach looks for and makes use of the things that help the horse to retain, or recover, the physical strength, movement and balance that he has in his natural state, even when subjected to the weight of a rider. To accomplish this, requires a certain level of education, skill and commitment in the people who handle, train and ride him. It also requires that the equipment that is used on the horse is able to support the same aims in the way it is designed, and used.

With this as its core principle, the BALANCE approach to '**Constructive Saddling**' was created, developed and is used by the BALANCE organisation. These principles also form the foundation of the '**Constructive Riding**' methods created, developed and used by the BALANCE co-founders Carol Brett and Lesley Taylor under their '**Riding For The Horse**' business. These two key influences on the life of the ridden horse dovetail together so beautifully. The principles can be used to create a highly effective **Remedial Saddling Programme** for horses who need to recover from past saddle related damage *and* a **Maintenance Saddling Programme** for horses who have healthy bodies and need to stay that way!

Here are two very simple diagrams that show some of the key differences between the conventional way of fitting saddles that most horses still have to put up with, and 'Constructive Saddling'.

The Conventional way...



The BALANCE Way...



WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE FOR THE RIDER?

The methods used by Conventional Saddle Fitters have been influenced far more by riders than by horses. This is, perhaps understandable, because at the end of the day it is the rider that has control of the credit card.....not the horse. With increasing numbers of inexperienced, unfit and uneducated riders to cater for during the past 50 years, saddle manufacturers and saddle fitters have been encouraged to lean towards supplying saddles that are as safe and secure as possible, on the back of the moving horse....even when the rider is insecure, unstable, unbalanced and nervous! This creates what we call **'Defensive Saddling'** which makes things easier for the rider, but usually at a cost to the horse, in-terms of his own comfort, soundness, health and quality of movement.

SO, DO YOU HAVE TO BE A VERY EXPERIENCED RIDER TO USE THE BALANCE, CONSTRUCTIVE SADDLING APPROACH?

No, you don't have to have had any experience of riding to use this method of saddling and in fact, there are riding schools and therapeutic riding centers who use BALANCE saddles with very good results. **What you do need** to have is a commitment to training yourself to be balanced, coordinated and stable on the back of a moving horse, without requiring the saddle to hold you in place or cover up any flaws in your own ability!

For this reason, even when the benefits to the horse are obvious, there will always be riders who will reject the BALANCE approach and criticize it, because they are too attached to their old patterns of movement and old patterns of thinking to make good use of it. Fortunately, for them, if not for their horses, there are plenty of saddle fitters and saddle suppliers who will be only too pleased to offer Defensive Saddling methods and equipment to keep them happy.

WHERE DO I GET MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE BALANCE ORGANIZATION AND ITS CONSTRUCTIVE SADDLING METHODS?

We suggest that you start by going to the BALANCE website, on:

www.BALANCEinternational.com

Here, you will find information on:

- The BALANCE Organization and the people behind it,
- 'Constructive Saddling' what it is, how it works and what you need by way of equipment.
- Who can help you to see and try the BALANCE Saddling System?
- How can you make it possible for your horse to have the opportunity to try a BALANCE saddle?
- What other people have experienced after changing to a 'Constructive Saddling' approach.
- Why using equipment that has the BALANCE logo on it demonstrates the consideration and respect you have for your horse.

