

How to do a wither tracing

1: Stand your horse on a flat level surface. Make sure your horse is standing square with all four feet bearing equal weight.

2: GENTLY encourage your horse to raise or flex his spine up by tickling and lifting the base of his rib cage. This will give you a fuller more accurate wither tracing.

3: Place your Flexicurve over his wither 1” behind his scapula. With even and light pressure form the Flexicurve to the shape of his wither.

4: Remove the Flexicurve and place it on your sheet of paper. Make sure you identify the left side of your horse on your wither tracing.

5: Now that you have finished your wither tracing, continue with your visual inspection and comments of your horse.

6: With your horse still standing square, take a stool and stand behind your horse and look down his back.

7: Your observation should include the following:

A: The shape of each shoulder i.e.: the right shoulder appears to be more flat and less developed than the left.

B: Wither shape. I.e.: left side of wither appears to be concave while right is flat etc.

C: Ribcage or weight bearing area of back i.e.: back appears to be even, or left side of back dramatically or slightly flatter than right.

D: and lastly your horses pelvis. i.e.: are they even, describe shape and muscle development.

8: Now continue your inspection of your horse by moving to his left side and gently palpate his back starting at the base of his neck moving towards his tail. Continue to do this with increasing pressure about three times on both sides of his back.

The purpose of this is to identify any tenderness in his wither, shoulder, back and hind quarters. Write all of your comments down to accompany your wither tracing.

This concludes a basic wither tracing.

Why do a wither tracing

A: Wither tracing are a great concrete way to get a snap shot of your horse's tree width. This will allow a saddler to accurately adjust your saddle to your horse from a distance.

B: Do wither tracings often and you will be able to track your horse's development. Keep track of how a training program is impacting your horse's top line.

C: Take a wither tracing with you to a saddlery to decide which saddles to sign out. A knowledgeable saddle fitter will be able to help you with which saddles might suite your horse the best.

Tools required for a wither tracing

Standard 8.5 x 11 sheet of paper

18" flexicurve. Available from most business and art supply stores

Fine tip pen

Most of all bring patience; an accurate wither tracing requires practice. Be prepared to try a few times before you are satisfied with the finished tracing.