

TYPES OF WESTERN SADDLES

The following are representatives of the most commonly available Western saddles. You should work with a professional to determine the saddle that is best for you based on the discipline you ride, the conformation of your horse, and your budget.



Roping: The roping saddle is used in competition and to work cattle. The large wrapped horn, low swell, and deep seat are characteristic of roping saddles. Roping saddles are designed to keep the riders balance over the center of the saddle (with the rider in an upright position) so that he or she can throw the rope.



Reining: The reining saddle is used by western reiners who perform patterns in competition including circles, sliding stops and spins. The reining saddle has a characteristic low cantle, low, small horn, and is designed to be somewhat lighter with a smaller swell than other western saddles. Fenders are generally positioned so that the stirrup falls under the swell. This allows the rider to sit in the seat for those quick stops.



Cutting: The cutting saddle is used in competition and to work cattle (or cut them from the herd). The cutting saddle generally has a larger horn and swell than the reining saddle but is similar in many ways including fender placement and cantle height. The horn of some cutting saddles is angled slightly forward. Some reining riders prefer a cutting saddle.



Pleasure: The Western pleasure saddle is used for trail and pleasure riding as well as competition. Show or equitation saddles typically are ornate with silver conchos and accents, and may feature intricate leather tooling. Equitation saddles sit the rider in a more upright position while pleasure saddles appropriate for trail use position the rider back more in the saddle.