

## WOW Saddles - Frequently Asked Questions

### How do I know if my horse will like a WOW Saddle?

Normally we will suggest a local retailer who will visit you so you can ride on the saddles and see if you and the horse like them before ordering a saddle.

### Can I have a choice of Flocking?

Yes, normally WOW saddles have the Flair air flocking system, but you have the option of wool flocking, Flair, foam or Flair Mark II.

### What is Flair?

Flair is a system of four adjustable air bags –two in each panel – that provide a soft bearing surface between saddle and horse. The air bags enable the saddle balance to be changed front to back and side to side to put the rider's weight in the center of the saddle and can compensate for a horse's asymmetry. Proven by pressure testing comparing flair to wool flocking and foam systems, Flair reduces point pressures, creating a much lower and even pressure footprint, whilst also absorbing the jarring shock created by the momentum of horse and rider. Almost without exception, it allows the horse to "swing" through its back, being more elevated and taking a longer stride. When jumping the horse bascules better under Flair and Flair is proven to reduce the pressure under the saddle created by landing from a jump, so horses are more manageable when jumping a course of jumps.

### What is the difference between Flair and Flair Mark II?

Flair and Flair Mark II are both patented systems of flocking. Flair as described above, has four large air bags filling the panel with small foam shapes sitting over the air bag to create shock absorption. Worldwide, nothing has been proven to better Flair in pressure dispersal, but sometimes horses are too "free", and the rider finds it difficult to sit too; so, Flair Mark II was created as an alternative. Flair Mark II comprises a foam panel with small air bags sitting into the foam. The small air bags enable the rider to alter the balance of the saddle front to back and side to side but the horse does not elevate in their stride as the system is not massaging their muscles as the original Flair does. Accordingly, it is providing some of the benefits but "without releasing the hand brake on the horse" and without the "swing of the back" that some riders cannot cope with.

### Does the WOW saddle have a tree?

WOW saddles have a unique patented carbon fibre tree that is designed to allow the front of the saddle to move or twist with the diagonal movement of the shoulders of the horse whilst the part of the seat under the rider stays still. This can be seen by looking at pressure testing. In comparison to other saddles, because the front is moving independently the rider centre of force stays very still, whilst in other saddles the rider is moved by the twisting motion of the whole seat created as the horse's shoulder moves backwards..

### What else is different about a WOW saddle in comparison to other brands?

In addition to the tree and the choices of flocking, WOW has more headplates available than other brands in not just differing angles, but also different arches or hoops shape. IN addition there are no tree points

but instead the WOW pointless panel™ system not only prevents point pressures (none) but also removes the stirrup bar pressures seen in other saddles when pressure testing and in the compression of wool flocking behind the stirrup bars.

## How can you say your head plates differ from other brands?

Brands offering interchangeable headplates are talking about the angle of the headplate. WOW has headplates in the U range starting at 73 degrees – very narrow - through to 143 degrees – 8X wide. All WOW saddles can take any of these head plates (as well as the V and UU headplates) because the tree is flexible enough at the front to stretch from 73 degrees to 143 degrees. Other brands cannot do this angle change in a single tree.

In addition to changing the angle WOW offer three ranges of head plates – the V head plate, the U head plate and the UU headplate. The V headplate has a very closed head, the U is the middle or normal arch and the UU has a very wide arch or hoop allowing for horses with very wide spinal processes and surrounding musculature.

A 1 V, 1U and 1UU headplate are all the same angle and fit, it is just the arch at the top of the headplate that changes in width. This means as your horse puts on muscle but does not change the angle of the withers WOW can change

## Do you have different tree shapes?

Yes, when you compare horses looking along the length of their spine you can see that some are very curved in the spine, other more normal and other very flat. Accordingly, we offer our trees in flat, semi curved and flat. Every style of seat is available in the three curvature options. If your horse starts in a flat tree and later becomes more curved as it progresses in its training, then you can remove the seat with the flat tree and exchange it over to a semi curved or curved tree version of that seat.

## Why do you have two stirrup bars?

We actually have three stirrup locations on the tree. There are two stirrup bars – a front and another further back, plus a third position further back fixed direct into the tree. The third position is used by some dressage riders and endurance riders where they are using a very straight leg position to get their ankle under the hip/shoulder plane. This depends on the geometry of the rider and how much they “open” their hips to drop their leg.

The front and second bar are used by dressage riders, trail riding, hunting, showjumpers and cross country riders but the choice again is dependent on the riders geometry and not always on the assumed “front is jumping, back is dressage”.

## Why is your adjustability different from other brands that offer changes in flap positions etc?

We have several fixing points in the tree specific for the flaps so when you change the flap position you can ensure the symmetry is still kept. If you use Velcro fittings you cannot move parts and maintain the symmetry and straightness.

## If you widen or narrow the saddle using headplates are you distorting the tree and creating pressure points for the horse?

When you change the angle of a fixed tree in a tree machine you will change the whole geometry of the tree. Widening a tree will actually make it more curved front to back. Narrowing it will flatten the curvature. The stirrup bars will be affected and can turn in or dependent on the amount of adjustment.

With a WOW saddle the tree is Y shaped with the point of the Y at the pommel. It is totally rigid front to back but the area where the headplate lies is totally flexible and therefore moulds around whatever shaped headplate is put in it. The stirrup bars also move to the new angle and keep a smooth line with the rest of the tree.

## Can you fit a very wide horse?

Yes, WOW headplates go to 8X wide but in addition, we do different panels styles for narrow and wide horses depending on the profile of their back over the wither and behind the wither. So we make panels with Tabs for horses whose withers are pyramid in shape and options of very close contact if the horse is concave in shape or with more lift if the horse is wide but still has a slightly convex shape behind the wither. So, we can fit Highlands, Welsh, Arabs, Haflingers, Percheron and all the other British natives as well as the warmbloods and thoroughbreds.

## Do you fit Andalusian, Lusitano and Friesian breeds of horses?

Yes, we are extremely popular with baroque style horses as well as quarter horses because we can accommodate the wide muscled wither and back

## I have a 3-day eventer with extremely high wither. Can you fit him?

Yes, we can fit extremely high withered horse without worry of the saddle dropping. Now has panels that are designed to extend the tree support much lower than a conventional saddle's tree and panel. The support of the panel comes right down onto the top of the rib cage behind the scapulars, this support being lower down supports the front of the saddle on the rib cage and not on the sheer vertical sides of the withers.

## My saddles always slip to the side. Can you help?

Yes. There are multiple reasons why I saddle will slip sideways. It should be noted that whilst we can hold a saddle straight on a horse you should always ask the question why you are slipping in the first place. Saddle slip can be associated with isometric development of musculature or lameness. Then there is the crooked rider to also consider.

With the Wow girthing we can set up the saddle, so it is straight by setting up the girthing asymmetrically. This will encourage the horse to develop better symmetry by taking more equal load on all four limbs.

## My horse has a short back, and my saddler says my current saddle is too long. Can you help?

Yes. Wow can have a shortened panel which is 1 inch smaller than the seat size. This means you could have a 17-inch seat with a 16-inch panel. It is not possible to have a bigger difference in this as it would cause too much pressure at the rear of the saddle.

## My saddles always go forward. Will a WOW saddle do the same?

No, if the saddle is set up correctly with the girthing more forward by either for using a foregirth or point strap. Saddles normally move forward onto the shoulder because of incorrect girthing (girth straps). The saddles fit and general set up could be a problem, but we assume in this case the saddle is fitting.

## My horse has very big sensitive withers – what can WOW do to make my horse comfortable?

In these cases, most saddles perch on the horse's musculature rather than wrapping around it. The horse is affectively clothes pegged by the saddle because the gullet is not wide enough. With wow you have the options of a hooped arch, UU headplate, an extra wide gullet and something we call a tabbed panel. With these three options combined you could have the widest possible horse and the saddle would sit around the withers rather than perched on top.

## Could my horse's bucking be due to my saddle?

There are numerous reasons why your Horse might be bucking, saddle positioning is one. Horses do not like saddles sitting on the shoulder and dropping backwards neither do they like saddles that slip back onto the lumbar. Both reasons can be addressed with the correct set up of Girthing.

## My saddles always slide backwards when moving? Would a WOW Saddle do any better?

These types of horses can always be problematic, the girth groove on these horses is normally much further back and therefore requires the girthing of the saddle to be moved backwards to keep the saddle more forwards. We have a special type of girthing developed just for this type of horse.

## My horse is croup high. Can you fit him?

Yes, we can fit this type of horse. The saddle must be kept in balance and therefore the back of the saddle needs to drop so we accommodate this by having panels with smaller rear gussets.

## My horse is very sensitive when I do up the girth. Can you help?

Yes, we have some particularly good girths that are padded on the sternum that alleviate pressure on the pectoral muscles. These are the "H" Girth and Elegance Girth.

## My saddles always move side to side and lack stability. Could WOW do any better?

If the saddle fits but just rolls one way and then the other, then you probably have quite a round barreled horse with not a lot of wither. We would suggest a "H" girth and use the point strap and a back-balance strap on the saddle. In this way the pull of the girth is spread over as much of the saddle as possible keeping in contact with the horse and therefore more grip = more stability.

## Can I choose the colours on my new WOW saddles?

Yes, you have complete choice of colours and finishes on every part of your saddle.

## How often do I have to refit the saddle?

How long is a piece of string? The problem with saddle fitting is the better we fit the horse and it performs, the more quickly it will change shape. Therefore, initially you might need your saddle checked within the first month, then 2 months then 4 – 6 months. It is different for each horse. It also depends how much work is being done and the quality of that work.

## Can I change my headplate?

Yes, if you wish you can change every aspect of your saddle.

## What is the WOW saddle gauge, and can I use it on other brands?

The saddle gauge is specifically designed for WOW saddles. Every manufacturer's tree shape and size are slightly different, so our sizes are not going to relate to another brand.