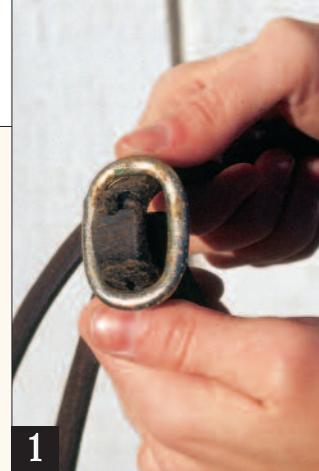


# Tack safety check

Before you ride, evaluate the condition of your equipment to reduce the risk of breakage and malfunction.

Tack failure is rare, but the consequences can be catastrophic. Protect yourself and your horse by taking a few moments before every ride to thoroughly inspect the spots subject to the greatest wear and tear. Here's how to identify signs of impending equipment breakdown.



1

Check the leather under all buckles. The holes that the fastener slips into are prone to cracking and splitting, which can cause the buckle to come loose and fall away.



2

Inspect stress points where leather loops around metal for signs of wear, thinning or tearing.



3

Use your thumb to wiggle the hook-on studs on English bridles. Restitch or replace those that move easily.



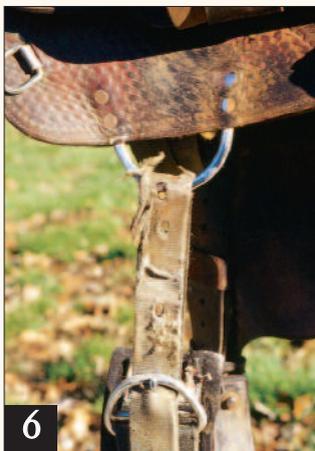
4

Thick Western stirrup leathers rarely fail, but those on an English saddle are more vulnerable to wear. Examine the stitching near the buckle (left) and where the leather loops through the stirrup (right). Signs of stress include rips, stretching and cracks.



5

Test the strength of all hardware. For example, the Chicago screws on Western bridles may need to be tightened.



6

Inspect the cinch strap on a Western saddle, looking for fraying and other signs of deterioration. Tug sharply on the strap to test the security of the rigging dee.



7

Scrutinize the billet straps on an English saddle. Above frequently used holes, look for deep wear marks. Eventually, they may tear.



8

Examine the area around the buckle of a cinch. Pull on an elastic-ended English girth to see whether it is overly stiff or stretchy—signs that it may be on the verge of failing. 🐾