

# CHRIST

## FUR SADDLE - BAREBACK PAD INFORMATION

### What is a fur saddle?

A fur saddle is a treeless saddle, which consists mainly of lambskin. The inventor of the fur saddles is CHRIST Lambskins, Werner Christ GmbH, [www.lammfelle.de](http://www.lammfelle.de)

### Are all Fur saddles models suitable for every horse type?

In general, this question can be answered with a yes. It is worth comparing the characteristics of the individual models, since they do differ.

Technically speaking, the **CLOUD Spezial+** model is the latest development of CHRIST and the possibilities it offers to a rider are probably the best thing you can get at the moment.

In my experience, it's easiest to switch from traditional saddle to a fur saddle that resembles the style of riding you are already used to.

If you are currently riding an English saddle (i.e. dressage saddle), I would expect you to really love the **Basic Plus** or **Premium Plus**. If you use Western saddles, I strongly recommend the **Diamond Plus**.

**The Cloud Spezial+** is also designed for Western and leisure riders, but its versatile construction also allows for gymnastic jumps.

**The Iberica Plus** is the real all-round model; everyone simply loves it, no matter which discipline they came from. It's also our best-selling saddle.

You can find further descriptions of the individual models here:

Visit [CHRIST Homepage](http://CHRIST-Homepage.com) Bareback Pads

### How do I choose the right size?

The size of the fur saddle should be selected primarily by the riders size. Ladies up to clothing size 8/10 (European 40/42) will best fit in PO size, but can also take the WB size, if they have large-sized horses, which would make the PO size look tiny on their horses. But this is a purely aesthetic matter. Ladies 10+ size will find WB size most comfortable. Size WB will also fit smaller horses and ponies.

Men should choose size WB size if their sizes are 40/42 or above.

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## **Pressure points and what to expect:**

The pressure is mainly located where you sit and is caused by the bones of your pelvis. Just like riding without a saddle, except that the CHRIST fur saddles protect your horses back via lambskin cushion underneath the saddle, the composite upholstery (padding inside) and the seat's lambskin and together distribute the pressure evenly alongside the horses back.

Since CHRIST fur saddles do not have a fixed saddle tree, they are ideally suited for every horses' back. Yes, every single one of them.

This is particularly helpful if you're fitting a sway backed horse, or extremely short backed horses, or are dealing with symmetry issues. CHRIST fur saddles are a great alternative and often the only way to ride these horses again.

Fur saddles don't have to be fitted, because only soft and very flexible materials are used and nothing hinders or restricts the movements of the horse, therefore, CHRIST fur saddles suit all horses.

## **How do I get on my horse with a fur saddle?**

The most suitable way to mount is by using a mounting block, preferably one which is high enough to sit on the horse from above. But there are many ways to mount your horse, check out this YouTube video to get some ideas: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A\\_3AfKlaGtc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A_3AfKlaGtc)

It's often difficult to get on a fur saddle by using the stirrups. The video of Mrs. Tanja Leona Meyer shows that there are some riders that can do it. Also, it is possible that a second person is holding the opposite side down while you mount. Whichever variation you choose depends on your body size, your weight and the size and built of your horse.

## **With or without stirrups?**

This is the number one question of riding for fur saddle sellers. There are both, riders who use the fur saddle with stirrups, as well as riders who use the saddle without stirrups.

The use of stirrups has not caused a negative development in any horse. Some horsemen can not cope with the stirrups, because the necessary elasticity in the ankles is not enough and they often loose the stirrups or do not sit well. This does happen to riders with treed saddles as well. Also the light dredging in the fur saddle feels itself for the inexperienced Fellsattelreiter habituationig. It is a question of the exercise and a question of the technique - then also the light dumping works easily.

## **How are the stirrups attached?**

The CHRIST fur saddles are all equipped with stirrup leather attachments. The leathers are attached via a D-ring, which is sewn on the saddle strap.

## **What kind of stirrup leathers do I need for the CHRIST fur saddles?**

As a general rule of thumb, you'll need considerably shorter than the usual stirrup leathers. It's smart to have a hole punch handy and ready, just in case.

## **How can I avoid feeling the stirrup buckles pressing through?**

It may happen that the stirrup buckles press when they are pulled up all the way. If you pull the buckles down to the stirrup, you can solve the problem.

## **Which stirrup model should I use?**

Since the stirrups are attached to a fixed ring on all CHRIST fur saddles, we recommend using the use of safety stirrups.

## **How tight do I have to girth up my horse?**

Just as tight as you would any other treed saddle. You should still get two fingers between saddle girth and horse. The saddle should not be too loose, as it could slip when you do a sudden weight shift.

## **Do I need a saddle pad?**

Especially the therapeutic value of the lambskin suggests a direct use of the fur on horseback. It is temperature-compensating in every season, breathable, elastic and hard wearing. It forms a natural air cushion, which has a soothing effect, especially in the case of pressure-sensitive skin and helps to avoid pressure points. Also this characteristic of the fur saddle could confirm what many fur saddle riders have claimed, none of the horses got any sore spots from the use of a fur saddle. The fur saddle consists of 100% protein. Protein is not a breeding ground for viruses and bacteria. Wool can absorb up to 30% moisture in the form of water vapor without feeling wet or cold. The lambskin has an antibacterial effect and protects the skin. If you still want to use a saddle pad, there are suitable saddle pads for all CHRIST fur saddles available to fit your saddle nicely. The use of a pad is recommend for long trail rides.

## **Are there any negative effects when using the fur saddle over a long period of time?**

No! Up to the present time, we are not aware of any adverse effects caused by long-term use of the fur saddle. Also not when it was used with stirrups.

## **Pressure load?**

If you use the fur saddle with stirrups, a punctual pressure load is created.

## **Is this harmful to my horse?**

It is true that there is pressure on the billets of the fur saddle, but this finding does not necessarily indicate that there is a risk of injury. In the meantime, there are quite a few "Fur-saddle-riders" who have been using this saddle for a long time, both with and without stirrups without any harm being done to their horses.

The many experiences, also in the long-term use, clearly show that the use of a fur saddle from CHRIST has not led to any negative development of the horses. And this applies both to the health aspect and to the general rideability of these horses. With all "meaningful" technology such as eg. Saddle pressure measurements, it remains to be noted that the "Fur-Saddle-Horses" we know have no proven problems caused by the fur saddle.

For us the welfare of the horse is always our main focus. It is for this reason, the quality of materials used is extremely important to us, in order to ensure a partnership-based approach. The fur saddle can therefore be an important accessory in every tack room.

## **Is the absence of a supposed spinal freedom in the CHRIST saddles a problem?**

No! The fur saddle is made of lambskin and without a tree. Because of its material and the associated light weight, it does not restrict the movement of the spinal column in any way.

You don't hesitate either to put a blanket on your horse or a saddle pad under the saddle - these are usually also on the spine, without restricting the movement. In addition, the rider should not simply "fall" on his horse, but sit upright.

Even if you sit on your horse without a saddle, your weight does not affect the vertebrae of the spine, but your weight rests on the rib cage. This is a great spot to reference to the flat-lying thigh - a main requirement to a classical seat.



## **The fur saddle as an alternative:**

### When is the fur saddle an alternative?

Whenever there is no matching saddle and you do not want to ride without a saddle.

### Here are some very common horse owner scenarios:

1. You can't find a suitable saddle for your horse.
2. You're done with constant saddle fitting appointments. No more flocking in, flocking out!
3. Your saddle is out for repairs and you need something for the transition time.
4. You finally did it and ordered a custom-made saddle, and are now afraid that your horse will lose muscles and then the expensive saddle will not fit.
5. You are commemorating to finally start this young horse, but which saddle will you buy? And how long will it fit? Experience shows that young horses change very quickly.
6. Your horse could not be ridden for a long time. It was sick or you depend on the weather, and yes, we are dreaming of an Indoor arena, too! In winter, there's no riding, sometimes for weeks. This leaves traces on your horse and your horse will lose muscles, the saddle won't fit.
7. Your horse is on pasture board. In winter, his shape is amazing, but when the pasture season begins, your horse will suddenly becomes very round. And here you go again, flocking in, flocking out.
8. OR: you will need two treed saddles, one for summer and one for winter.
9. OR: buy a DP Saddle!
10. You love your ponies and would never let anything happen to them. But the search for saddles is extremely difficult. It has to be short and the gullet wide. You can't find an affordable used one that has these qualities, and the new saddle that does, is more expensive than your pony!
11. Your horse is getting old and a slight sway is recognizable - you adjust the training, because the tree saddle does not fit anymore, what a pity! And to buy a new, expensive saddle for an older horse is also a consideration that some horse owners despair. You're starting to think about sending your oldie but goodie into early retirement, just for lack of options. What a pity!
12. Some women despair of it, and do not like to talk about it: but you are always sore no matter which saddle you sit in!

## **When is the fur saddle a good transitional solution?**

Well, at all points, which were mentioned from 1) to 12) before. The fur saddle makes you at least a little more independent in your search for saddles, while saving you quite a bit of money.

## **Tree saddle. The tree saddle will always have a basic problem:**

it fits or it does not fit. It doesn't allow developmental changes because of its rigid fit, which does not adjust for individual changes in a horse. You can of course, through the use of saddle pads and shims, compensate for some - but that does not mean that the saddle is now more appropriate for your horse.

## **Fur saddle as a long-term solution?**

All the above points also apply to this question. It should be your personal decision, for the well-being of yourself and that of your horse. Some riders never want to get back into a treed saddle, while others love to use both. Competitive riders use their fur saddle for training at home, and because the saddle is not approved, use their treed saddle prior to the show. We recommend giving your horse 30 days prior to the show, to get used to the treed saddle again. The choice is yours to make, but generally spoken, nothing speaks against making a CHRIST fur saddle a long-term solution. You most definitely can!

## **Questions concerning the training of the horse in a fur saddle:**

Can any horse be ridden with a fur saddle?

Every healthy riding horse can also be ridden in a fur saddle. The fur saddle fits to each back line, accompanies each movement nicely and is not restricting to the horse's movement. The fur saddle fits.

Is the fur saddle suitable for horses, which have a weak muscular structure along their backs?

Yes! The fur saddle is particularly suitable for horses that are in muscle build-up phase. It's especially good, because it will allow for his muscles to recover and build-up will occur. You can avoid buying a saddle just to fit the weak back, just to turn around and buy a new one once the horse recovers.

The problem with treed, rigid saddles is that if you fit it to fit the weak back, muscle growth cannot happen, but if you don't, it will make the horse uncomfortable, it can even cause riding problems, behavioral problems, even long-term damage can occur. You are much more independent with a fur saddle - it accompanies the development of the horse during and after muscle recovery changes.

## **Is the fur saddle suitable for the training of young horses?**

Yes! At the beginning of his training the young horse is far from done with his physical development. It is rare to find a saddle with a fixed tree, which will fit the horse in the long run. But even with a young horse you are independent with a fur saddle, which accompanies the development of the horse no matter what.

## **Is the fur saddle OK to use on trail rides?**

Yes! It is absolutely possible to take extensive rides on the trails, you'll be able to also jump a few minor natural jumps or obstacles with it.

## **Are longer training sessions possible?**

Yes! Many of the known "Fur-saddle-horses" are also multi-talented leisure horses, because besides the intensive dressage work, they also enjoy long extended trail rides. Certainly it is also a question of how well conditioned both - horse and rider - are. It is not possible to simply slouch and be carried in a fur saddle. In a fur saddle, the rider accompanies the movement of the horse and this is certainly a physical challenge on extended rides.

## **Is the fur saddle suitable for competition use?**

No! The fur saddle is not suitable for competition, since it is not allowed. Because in general, treeless saddles are, according to § 70 LPO (Performance Examination Regulations), and the reference to the guidelines of the German Equestrian Federation FN (Federation Equestre Nationale) Band 1, not allowed in competition.

## **Questions concerning the training of the rider in the fur saddle:**

Can any rider use the fur saddle?

Yes! The fur saddle is suitable for all riders who feel comfortable in it.

Do I need to give myself time to adapt to this saddle?

Yes! In a fur saddle the rider sits closer to the horse and thus also feels its movements more intensively. This can lead to uncertainties in some riders.

Is the fur saddle suitable for beginners?

Yes! Obviously under expert supervision - but this applies to all beginners. The fur saddle is an excellent way to train the equilibrium of the rider, thus helping to create an independent seat.

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## **Is this a good saddle for children?**

Yes! Children feel more close to the horse through the fur saddle and learn to adjust to the horse's movement. In addition, the fur saddle is light, so it is easier for children to carry it and saddle the horse independently.

## **Do I have sufficient support in the fur saddle?**

Yes! Of course, there is no such thing as a guarantee for a saddle not to fall from the horse, but a rider finds generous support in a fur saddle and will safe in it.

## **Can I just as easily post a trot as in a my traditional saddle?**

Yes and no! You have to get used to the stirrup suspension, but with more experience this works well after a short adjustment of the seat. One should adhere to the rule of thumb "I can do anything in a fur saddle, that I can do bareback". In addition, it depends also and particularly on the skill level of the rider.

## **What happens to my seat in the fur saddle?**

It can happen that at first, your seat gets "worse" in a fur saddle. The saddle does not automatically sit you upright, like a dressage saddle would. The fur saddle will place you as if you were riding bareback, which can result in an optical chair seat. How much of a chair seat you would develop depends greatly on your riding abilities, but also on the physique of the horse. On a very round horse, you will have more tendencies to fall into a chair seat position, than on a large, slender, A-framed warmblood. However, chair-seat sitting on a fur-saddle is not a serious seat defect, since in most cases it is caused by the physique of the horse and does no harm to the horse.

## **Does a fur saddle influence my balance?**

The fur saddle improves the rider's balance. In the saddle, you are very close to the horse. You can feel every little movement. Thus, the motion impulses of the horse are transmitted directly to both, the pelvis and the spinal column. Therapeutic riding centers also incorporate this excellent quality into their daily routines. The patient experiences, through the body of the horse, that his entire movement apparatus can be resettled. A very impressive fact! For example, half-paralyzed people can develop a feeling for their body center.



## **Will it be difficult for me to sit a trot?**

The movements of the horse can be perceived more directly in the fur saddle, depending on how much swing your horse has and how balanced your seat is, it can be difficult to sit during trot with stirrups. In this case, it is advisable to ride without the stirrups first, and to work particularly on a centered and deep posture and on loosening ankles.

These are also recommendations that are not restricted to the fur saddle as these problems happen with treed saddles as well, but not so obvious. The fur saddle clearly reveals existing difficulties.

## **Are my riding cues perceived differently by my horse?**

The equestrian aids of the classic riding school and academic art of riding can be optimally combined with the freedom of movement in the fur saddle. I would even go as far to claim that these can be given more finely and precisely and more directly since the motion transmission is not attenuated.

