Riding for the Disabled Queensland Inc
Adaptive Equipment, Saddlery and Riding Techniques
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ADAPTIVE AIDS: STABILISING BLOCKS AND WEDGES

Recommended for riders with the following conditions:
- Acquired brain injury
- Cerebral palsy
- Low muscle tone
- Poor neck, trunk and head control

What do they do?
- Assist the rider to achieve a more upright and neutral position of the pelvis and trunk.
- Stabilises the elbow, forearm and hand positions to enable the rider to push through the arms.

Additional Information
Blocks may be stacked on top of each other to cater for individual needs.
Riders can lie prone over the block to rest before propping themselves up through the arms again.
ADAPTIVE AIDS: STABILISING STRAPS AND AIDS

Recommended for riders with the following conditions:
• Poor muscle tone
• Balance or stability problems
• Cerebral palsy
• Poor core or trunk strength
• Acquired brain injury

How do they help?
• Stabilise Rider’s limbs/body
• Assist rider’s with poor balance or muscle tone
• Increases walkers ability to assist rider as needed

Additional Information
Velcro straps:
• Better support is maintained if the Velcro bands meet across one another
• The attachment surface should be no greater than 6cm
ADAPTIVE AIDS: SACRAL WEDGES & OTHER SUPPORTS

Sacral Wedge

Recommended for riders with the following conditions:
• Riders that sit heavily in the 3 point, seat bone or buttock positions
• Cerebral palsy
• Riders with poor trunk control from either low or high muscle tone

What it Does
• Assists rider to achieve a more upright, neutral position of the pelvis
• Assists riders to develop core stability from improved pelvic position

Additional Information
• Wedge is held in place by a Velcro connection to a felt pad
• Helps to stop slouching with posterior pelvic tilt

Back and Shoulder Supports
• Address poor control in:
• Back support - lower or mid back
• Shoulder support - upper back and shoulder
ADAPTIVE AIDS: BAREBACK PADS & SADDLE PADS

Recommended for riders with the following conditions
• High or poor muscle tone
• Cerebral palsy
• Behavioural problems

What they do:
• Assists with more upright, neutral pelvic position
• Assists with balance and centering of position
• Helps improve and correct posture and balance
• Allows heat transfer from horse to rider, helps activate muscles

Additional Information:
• Can provide a challenging experience
• Helps to develop core strength and stability
• Useful trying alternate positions, such as prone or backwards, to challenge balance and develop confidence
ADAPTIVE AIDS: ADAPTIVE SADDLES

Recommended for riders with the following conditions

- High or poor muscle tone
- Cerebral palsy
- Riders with paraplegia, quadraplegia, spina bifida
- Poor Balance or stability
- Polio

What they do:

- Provide greater stability
- Allows rider to develop a more upright and neutral pelvic position
- Provides tools assist with correct posture

Additional Information

- Assists with achieving core strength
- Assists with stability
- Can be adjusted to suit individual riders
- Helps to stop slouching
- Assists with balance and stability in walk trot and canter
Recommended for riders with the following conditions:

- Poor trunk control due to high or low muscle tone
- Cerebral Palsy
- Riders that sit heavily on their buttocks or seat bones

Back Riser What it Does:

- Raises the back of the saddle to ensure the saddle remains in a level balanced position
- Assists rider to achieve a more upright, neutral pelvic position
- Assists with rider’s balance and centering.

**Saddle Pads** can be helpful to prevent soreness in horses’ backs

Additional Information:

- Useful for correcting pelvic tilt
- May be used to level saddle – the lowest point of the seat should be just behind the waist of the saddle
ADAPTIVE AIDS  ADAPTIVE STIRRUPS

Recommended for riders with the following medical conditions:
- Cerebral Palsy
- Multiple sclerosis
- Paraplegia
- Unstable or weak leg or foot position

Clogs and Toe Stoppers - How they Assist:
- Assists rider to maintain foot in stirrup
- Prevent the rider’s foot from slipping through the stirrup
- Lessens the possibility of rider’s foot becoming caught in the stirrup
- (This is particularly important with shoes other than riding boots)

Additional Information:
- Toe stoppers and clogs may be purchased from most saddlers
- These may also be custom built to suit particular rider’s needs
ADAPTIVE AIDS: STIRRUP ATTACHMENT TECHNIQUES

Recommended for riders with the following conditions:
• Paraplegia
• Cerebral Palsy
• Poor sensation or stability of legs/feet
• Low muscle tone

Additional Information:
• The riders foot must be able to break free in the event of a fall
• Double banding is an acceptable practice

What it Does:
• Stabilises the riders foot in the stirrup

HOW?
ADAPTIVE AIDS: HAND HOLDS

Recommended for riders with the following conditions:

• Poor Balance - allows rider to readjust position if balance is compromised
• Anxious or fearful riders – acts as a safety strap giving more confidence
• Riders with paraplegia, quadriplegia, spina bifida

What it Does:

• Acts as a stabilizing Bar to assist with balance in the saddle
• Aids riders to achieve the correct neutral pelvic position

Additional Information:

• Assists riders to gain a balanced position in all paces by gripping at hand hold or monkey grip
• Best with outside hand while on circles
• Can be used to prevent horse snatching reins by looping through grip for extra purchase
• Removable grips can easily be attached to any saddle
• Removable holds tend to have more forward placement and may assist riders needing shorter rein contact
ADAPTIVE AIDS: GRIPS AND NECK STRAPS

Recommended for riders with the following conditions:

- Poor Balance - allows rider to readjust position if balance is compromised
- Anxious or fearful riders – acts as a safety strap giving more confidence

What it Does:

- Aids riders to achieve the correct desired pelvic position
- Enables rider to push through the arms to stabilise position
- Assists with crest releases when riding over trot poles and jumps

Additional Information:

- Assists riders to gain a balanced position in all paces
- May assist to stabilise hands thus giving more consistent contact through reins
- May cause riders to flatten hands resulting in undesirable ‘pram pushing’ position
ADAPTIVE AIDS: GRASS OR DAISY REINS

Recommended for riders with the following conditions:
- Poor trunk control or lack of core strength
- Small stature
- Hand or arm deformities
- Low muscle tone or poor grip

Additional Information:
Grass reins may be attached either from the bit or the headpiece back to the D’s of the saddle

What it Does:
- Stops the reins from being loosened by being snatched from the rider’s grip
- Prevents the horse from grazing or dropping head to rub against knees or other objects
- Assists rider confidence and control
ADAPTIVE AIDS: REINS STANDARD

Reins Flat or Padded Leather:
Padded or Plain are generally used for riders who are able to learn the correct rein hold, aids and control of their horse.

The size and grip of their hand, as to the rein best suited to for their use

Important to consider the rider’s personal preference

Reins Rubber Coated or Cotton:
Give additional grip and are thicker enabling easier grip.

Especially useful in wet conditions or when extra grip is needed

Reins Plaited:
Give additional grip.

Loops or a strap to link the reins over the horse’s neck can be easily fitted to these reins

Reins: Rope and Woven Cotton
Often softer and more suited to riders with weaker grip
Enable the rider to easily identify where the reins should be held ensuring even length when lengthening or shortening the contact. Visually appealing to some riders.

Reins Rope Colour Coded
Offers an alternative thickness and texture that may assist grip.

Reins Colour Coded Eventing:
Assists with correct length
Raised leather stopper assists with grip and assists with preventing slip.
ADAPTIVE AIDS: REINS LADDER

Ladder Reins Joined:
Designed for use with one hand only
It is essential that the bridging sections are at the correct length to give the rider maximum control of the horse and to allow independence

Ladder Reins Double sided:
Used for riders with poor clasps or gripping problems
Available also for carriage and harness driving
ADAPTIVE AIDS: REIN LOOPS

What they do:
- Gives riders with limited grasp an alternate means of controlling the horse
- Assists riders with impaired grasp by allowing them to hold a tennis ball or rubber loop

Recommended for riders with:
- Impaired grasp or functional abilities
- Cerebral palsy
- Amputees or short arms
- Short stature
- Motor skill issues which create problems with the process of holding the reins correctly

Additional Information:
- Loops must be positioned to ensure even rein contact
- Can be used on one rein only for patients hemiplegia
- A strap may be used to stabilise the loops
ADAPTIVE AIDS: REINS BAR

Recommended for Riders with:
• Poor grasp
• Amputees
• Those riding with one hand
• Unstable or unsteady hands

How they Help:
Enable riders to control with only one hand

Camel Bars:
• Help maintain a better grasp in the prone position
• Raised part of the Bar helps stabilise rider’s hands

Additional Information:
Must be set at the correct length to allow maximum independence
ADAPTIVE AIDS: REIN LINK & OVER STRAP

What it does:

- Stabilises the reins for riders with unsteady hands
- Makes it easier to retrieve dropped reins quickly
- Prevents riders from riding with hands held too high

Additional Information:

Neck strap placed over the link or rein link may be used independently or together.
Assists riders in maintaining an even more consistent contact.

Recommended for riders with:

- Cerebral palsy
- Autism spectrum disorder
- Intellectual disabilities
- Unsteady hands
ADAPTIVE AIDS: MOUNTING BLOCKS PORTABLE

What they Do;
Assist riders to mount or dismount by providing extra height

Additional Information:
Easily moved into required position and for storage

Platform requires two person lift when being moved

Recommended for the following Conditions:
• Poor coordination
• Small stature

Mounting Platform also assists:
• Riders who need an initial sideways sitting position during mounting
• Riders with poor coordination
ADAPTIVE AIDS: MOUNTING RAMPS FIXED AND PORTABLE

What they Do:
Assist riders to mount or dismount by providing extra height

Recommended for the following Conditions:
- Poor coordination
- Small stature
- Riders who need to be positioned higher during mounting
- Riders with poor coordination

Additional Information:
Assists with wheelchair access

Portable Ramp
Easily moved into required position and for storage
ADAPTIVE AIDS: HOISTS FIXED AND PORTABLE

What they Do;
Assist riders to mount or dismount when other options are limited or not possible

Recommended for the following Conditions:
• Riders who are unable to adequately weight bear during mounting
• Paraplegia etc

Additional IMPORTANT Information:
• Volunteers must be trained in using hoists before attempting use
• Horses must also be trained with and comfortable with hoists
• Riders may need assistance to correctly position themselves once mounted
• Riders must be able to adequately maintain the position of their head and neck whilst being hoisted
ADAPTIVE AIDS: VAULTING ROLLER

What it Does:
• Allow riders to find their balance and a central riding position on the horse
• Assists in improving posture and balance difficulties
• Assists with achieving a more upright and neutral position of the pelvis

Recommended for the following Conditions:
• Acquired brain injury (ABI)
• Cerebral palsy (CP)
• Low muscle turn
• Poor trunk, neck and head control

Additional IMPORTANT Information:
• Useful for trying alternate positions that challenge the rider’s balance such as riding backwards or prone.
• Helps the rider to develop core strength and stability
• Riders gain confidence from being able to hold onto the hands during activities
ADAPTIVE AIDS: CARRIAGE DRIVING

What it Does;
Develops therapeutic skills, confidence and self esteem and a feeling of independence.

Recommended for the following Conditions:
- Riders who are unable to mount horses
- Paraplegia
- Poor muscle tone or coordination
- People in wheelchairs

Additional IMPORTANT Information:
- Volunteers must be trained in getting people in and out of vehicle
- A qualified RDA ‘Whip’ must accompany the driver with disability
- Requires three helpers on the ground, the groom plus two others to assist the driver in and out of the vehicle
- Both the driver and the whip are required to have a set of reins
Compiled by Megan Wray
For the Use of
RDAQ – PCAQ Affiliated Centres

References from:
RDA Victoria:  Adaptive saddlery, equipment and riding techniques
Clover Lodge Equestrian Supplies:
http://www.cloverlodgeequestriansupplies.com/
Freedom Rider: http://www.freedomrider.com/