Equestrian
Sport Biomechanics
'Rider Saddle Horse'

Athletic success is a function of the sum of the parts. In no other sport does this apply more aptly than in equestrian riding.

In equestrian riding, when we are striving for success we need to not address the rider / saddle interface, the saddle / horse interface and their reciprocal relationships – horse / saddle and saddle / rider.

Just as humans can acquire and offset bad postural habits or positions, so can the horse. Can bad rider posture adversely affect the posture and alignment of a horse and if so can a horse with poor biomechanics adversely affect a rider.

If we accept the above as possible, then we must accept that the saddle as the link between rider and horse can get worn-in in a particular fashion. This then reflects on either / or both rider and horse.

When you buy a previously ridden horse are you inheriting the previous riders physical faults? When you transfer your saddle from one horse to the next are you not carrying forward your potential faults to the next horse.

The permutations can become endless and the potential reasons for the lack of improvement become clearer.

Equestrian riders must now embrace the science of biomechanics as it relates to both the rider and the horse as factors influencing their riding.

A good healthcare professional, with an understanding of riding should be able to perform a biomechanical both a static and dynamic – rider/horse assessment of the rider and review the current state of the saddle to identify particular wear patterns.

In addition, they should be able to provide a static and dynamic biomechanical assessment of the horse. Quite often biomechanical faults will show up as improper postural angle and loss of muscle bulk in specific areas of the horse.

Once an assessment is completed then a biomechanical plan of action can be developed. This could include any one or combination of rider, saddle and/or horse.

Embrace the science of biomechanics you will be pleasantly surprised.