

A Fitting Solution

Blanket experts offer advice to get the perfect fit for your horse.

By Liz Moyer

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Blanket experts agree that whatever blanket you select, it must fit properly. "A blanket that is too big is actually more likely to cause rubs than one that is too small, and can be dangerous," warns Liz Wilkinson, product coordinator and U.S. horse clothing specialist with Weatherbeeta, citing the risk of the horse becoming entangled in the surcingles or stepping on the back of the blanket when he tries to stand after lying down or rolling.

"The first thing to check after putting a blanket on the horse is to ensure that the length of the blanket is correct for the horse you are trying to fit. If it is too long or too short, then the other features will not fit properly as they are supposed to," says Rachael Hansen, Masa band manager at World Equestrian Brands.

When you feel confident you've selected the proper length for your horse, move to the front to evaluate the fit around his chest and neck, Hansen advises. "Once you have fastened the front closures, look at your horse's withers. The blanket should not rest behind his withers or directly on top of them. The proper place is in front of his withers."

Weatherbeeta's Liz Wilkinson adds, "The neck should be large enough that the horse is able to put his head down to graze, but not so large that his shoulders could 'pop out' of it. The drop should be long enough to wrap under the horse's belly for extra coverage, and the bottom binding of the blanket should be the same distance from the ground at the withers and rump. Walk the horse around to check for pressure points or areas that are too tight," she urges.

Sizing varies by brand and style. Measure according to the manufacturer's instructions, and look carefully at how it fits on your horse. "Remember, if a horse is comfortable in his properly fitted blanket he will be much happier to stay dressed," Wilkinson says.

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