

## Online Tack and Horse Equipment Guide

**Expand your equestrian vocabulary with our dictionary of tack terms.**

If a trip to the tack shop makes your head spin, or flipping through equestrian catalogs feels like information overload, you've come to the right place. Here is HorseChannel.com's dictionary of tack and horse equipment. Bookmark this page and check back frequently as we'll be adding new terms each month.

**Baby Pad:** A thin rectangle of cotton that fits between your horse's back and whichever other saddle pad you'd like to keep clean and neat.

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**Belly guard:** The belly guard prevents a jumper from hitting its underside with the front shoes.

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**Bit** (see also specific bit names): The piece of a bridle, usually made of metal, that sits in the horse's mouth. The bit is connected to the reins to facilitate communication from rider to horse.

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**Breastplate (English):** Just like western breast collars, English breastplates are primarily used to help prevent a saddle from slipping back out of the ideal position.

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**C Chicago screw:** Chicago screws consist of two parts, and one half is flat-headed.

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**Chifney** (also Ring bit): The chifney bit is not designed for riding purposes. Instead, it's combined with a halter to help a handler control a high-spirited young horse.

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**Crocheted Ear Bonnet** (See Ear Bonnet)

**Curb bit** (see also specific curb bit names): A curb bit has shanks with rings at the end where the reins attach to provide leverage when the rider pulls back. Curb bits typically also have a chain that puts pressure on the horse's chin groove when the reins are pulled.

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**Curb chain:** The curb chain is an integral part of nearly every type of leverage bit, whether it's being used in English or western riding.

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**D D-Ring snaffle bit:** This bit gets its name from the shape of the bit ring, which is shaped like the capital letter "D."

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**Dr. Bristol snaffle bit:** A double-jointed mouthpiece, similar to the French link, yet more severe.

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**E Ear Bonnet:** Crocheted Ear Bonnets (also called "ear hoods") first became popular in the world of show jumping.

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**Eggbutt snaffle bit:** This oddly named snaffle does indeed resemble the oval shape of an egg.

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**F Flex stirrups:** During the last decade a revolution of sorts has occurred in the design of English stirrups.

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**French link snaffle bit:** Like the Dr. Bristol snaffle, the French link features a three-piece mouthpiece.

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**Full-cheek snaffle bit:** The vertical cheekpieces prevent the bit rings from sliding into the corner of a horse's

mouth.

[Read more >>](#) **G** **Gag bit (western):** Despite the rather offensive name, gag bits can be useful training aids when used appropriately by a rider with skilled hands.

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**Grazing bit:** One of the most popular western curb bits, the grazing bit features fixed shanks that connect to a mouthpiece that usually has a mild or low port.

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**H** **High-port curb bit:** The height of the port helps to determine the severity of a leverage bit.

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**Hinged port curb bit:** The hinged port curb is popular among riders and trainers of western pleasure horses.

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**I** **J** **K** **Key bit:** Available in a variety of styles and mouthpieces, snaffle bits made with keys have an intriguing design.

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**Kimberwick (also Kimberwicke or Kimblewick):** A kimberwick is a curb bit for English riding that functions much like a Pelham only it is designed to be used with just one rein that exerts leverage action.

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**L** **Leverage bit:** Any bit that uses leverage instead of or in addition to direct contact. Common leverage bits are curbs, kimberwicks and pelhams.

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**Loose-ring snaffle bit:** One of the mildest bits, the plain snaffle features a smooth, simple mouthpiece and round bit rings which may be highly decorated for use on young western performance horses.

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**Low-port correction bit:** Though a wide range of western bit designs are referred to as correction bits, they all share a port, loose shanks and a hinged mouthpiece.

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**M** **Mullen mouth snaffle bit:** Despite the non-jointed mouthpiece, a Mullen mouth snaffle is just that: a snaffle.

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**N** **O** **O-Ring snaffle bit:** One of the mildest bits, the plain snaffle features a smooth, simple mouthpiece and round bit rings which may be highly decorated for use on young western performance horses.

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**P** **Peacock stirrups:** Young English riders are encouraged to use peacock stirrups.

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**Pelham bit:** There are rings for two reins on a Pelham bit. One is near the mouthpiece and is meant to function somewhat like a snaffle, using direct rein aids.

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**Pelham Reins:** The Pelham is the most popular leverage bit used in hunters and hunt seat equitation competition. It is designed to use two sets of reins along with a curb chain.

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**Polo wraps:** As the name suggests, polo wraps originated on the polo field, where they were used as protective covering for the horses' legs.

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**Q** **R** **Rhythm beads:** If you've ever seen a horse wearing what appears to be a jingling necklace, you've probably seen rhythm beads.

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**Ring bit (also Chifney):** The chifney bit is not designed for riding purposes. Instead, it's combined with a halter to help a handler control a high-spirited young horse.

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