

Fitting Instructions for Diana Thompson's Sidepull Bridle

Please Note: Diana Thompson's sidepull bridle is designed for use as a riding and ground work headstall only. Do not use it as a halter for tying up your horse.

STEP ONE: Position of the Noseband

Diana Thompson's sidepull bridle should be adjusted so that the noseband is placed in one of two positions on the horse's face. Both positions, which are explained on this page, are relatively high on the head. In these positions, the unique design of the bridle signals the horse to make an effortless sideways turn of his head using what is called lateral flexion of the poll joint. The poll joint is located at the top of the neck right behind the horse's ears. It's the moveable area between the back edge of the horse's skull and the first cervical vertebra (C-1), which is the first bone of the neck.

Lateral flexion of the poll joint relaxes the horse. It's one of the steps that need to take place so the horse can carry a rider in the balanced movement known as self-carriage. It leads to relaxed, proper collection. Trail horses as well as high performance horses benefit from lateral flexion of the poll joint. For more information on this movement, see pages X-X.

Adjust the Crown Piece to Place the Noseband

The crown piece is the long strap of the bridle that goes up behind the horse's ears. How high or low the noseband sits on the horse's face is determined by which hole you use on the crown piece. The crown piece has holes on both ends. Because the crown piece can slide through the loops of the browband it does not have to be adjusted on the same hole on both sides. For example: the crown piece can be buckled on the third hole on one side and second hole on the other side.

Upper Position of the Noseband

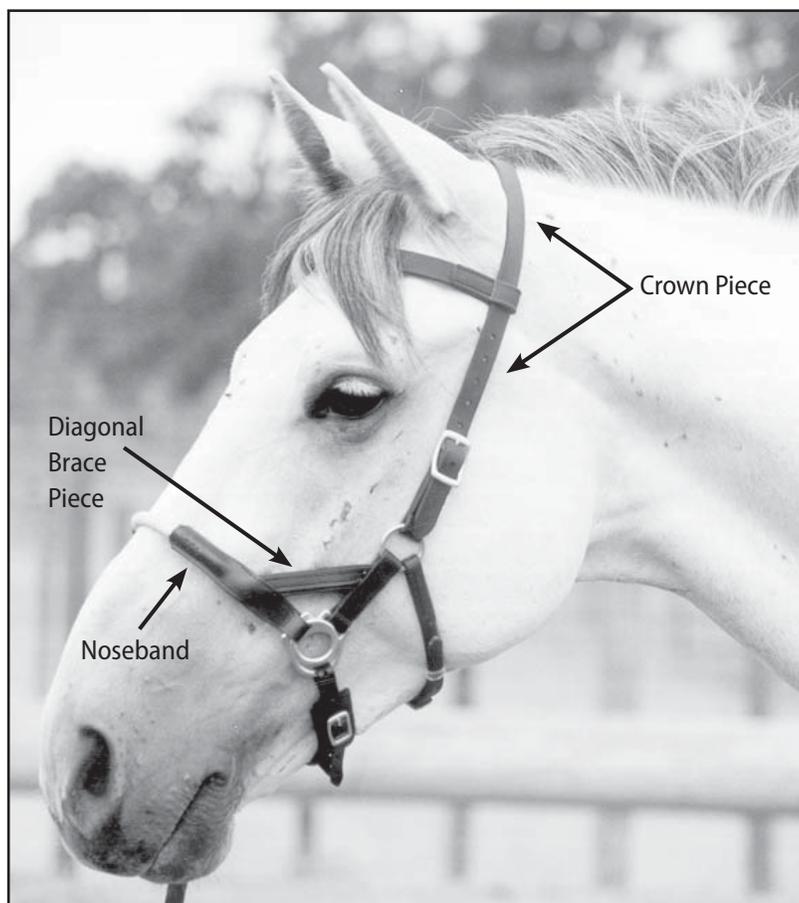
The noseband on the horse in the photo is in the upper position. This position places the diagonal brace piece of the noseband so it crosses over the lower edge of the cheekbone.

Lower Position of the Noseband

This position lowers the noseband so the diagonal brace piece sits just below the lower edge of the cheekbone. To avoid rubbing in this position, make sure the diagonal brace piece is low enough so it doesn't make contact with the cheekbone at all.

Which position you use depends on: the length of your horse's face; the size of the pointed edge of his cheekbones; and your horse's preference.

Note: When the noseband is in the upper position on a horse who has prominent cheekbones that stick out from the face, there may be a 1/2 inch or larger gap underneath the diagonal brace piece just below the cheekbone. In most cases, this gap will not cause any problem with the function of the noseband. If your horse has a long head and prominent cheekbones, try placing the noseband in the lower position. This way, the diagonal brace piece will rest below the horse's cheekbone.



In this photo, the sidepull bridle is placed in the upper position on Meritaj's face: the diagonal brace piece of the noseband crosses over the lower edge of his cheekbone. Because Meritaj has a long head, the noseband could also be placed in the lower position where the diagonal brace piece of the noseband is placed completely below the lower edge of the cheekbone.

STEP TWO: Jowl Strap

The second step is to adjust the jowl strap. It should buckle just below the round part of the horse's cheek/jaw.

The jowl strap's function is to position the sidepull noseband on the center of the horse's nose and keep it there. If the jowl strap is adjusted too long (so it is too loose), the noseband will slide over the nose left and right in a see-saw motion when the rider pulls left and right on the reins. This motion of the noseband is not desired at all. It will rough up the hair or skin on your horse's nose. To avoid this problem, adjust the jowl strap reasonably tight. You should be able to fit no more than two fingers between the jowl strap and the horse's jaw.

Once you have tightened the jowl strap, check the position of the jowl strap buckle. The goal is to have the buckle placed **in the center of the horse's jaw between the two bones.** If this isn't the case, remove the bridle from the horse's head and move the jowl strap around so that once it's tightened to the proper position, the buckle is in this center position.

PLEASE CHECK AGAIN: The jowl strap must be snug to hold the noseband in position. If the noseband slides at all from side to side when you pull on the reins, the jowl strap is too loose. The crown piece should be adjusted so the noseband rests across the horse's head in either the upper or lower position as explained on page one.

STEP THREE: Padded Chin Strap

The third step is to adjust the padded chin strap. The pad of the chin strap should rest underneath the bones of the horse's jaw. If the jowl strap is properly adjusted (see Step 2 above), the straps of the padded chin strap can be somewhat loose. Once the chin straps are buckled, you should be able to fit at least two fingers between the chin strap and the horse's face. This will allow the horse to be able to lick and chew easily. If you are riding and want your horse to be able to eat grass, loosen the straps of the padded chin straps even further.

Note: The straps on the padded chin strap do not have to be adjusted on equal holes on both sides. For example, the strap on one side can be buckled on the third hole and while the other strap can be buckled on the second hole.

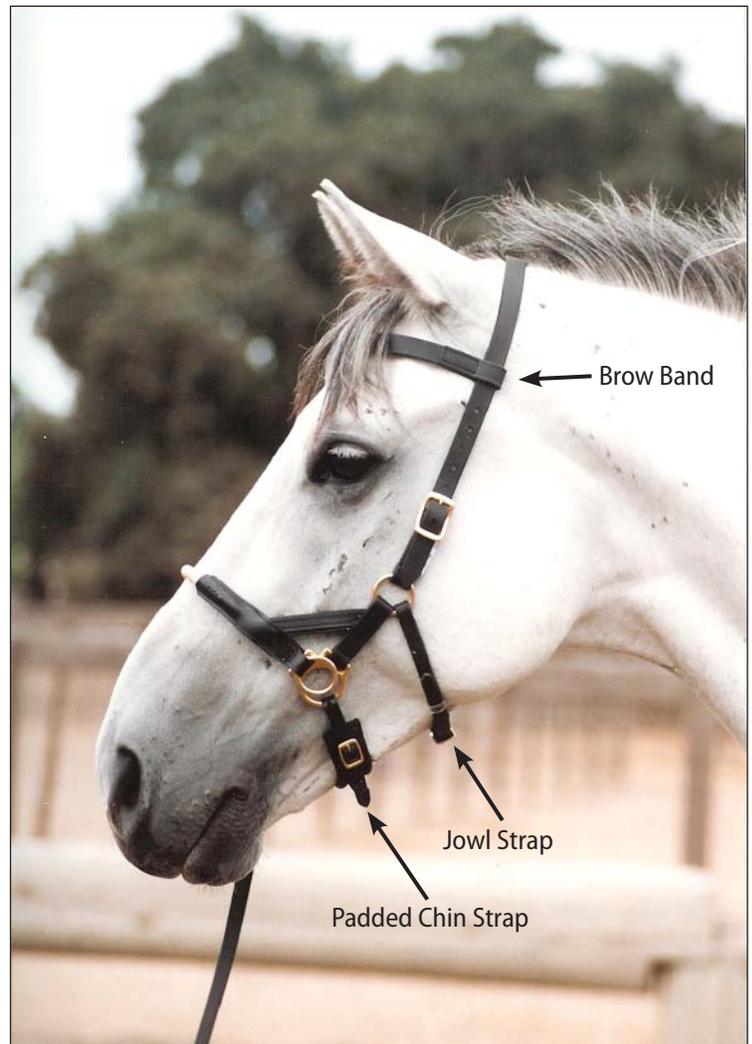
Now, check for proper length of the noseband, browband, jowl and chin strap as follows.

STEP FOUR: Check the Length of the Jowl Strap and Chin Strap

Once the bridle is in place, if the jowl strap or chin strap are too long or too short, contact our office regarding an exchange.

STEP FIVE: Check the Length of the Browband

The browband is too short if it pulls the crown piece forward into the base of the horse's ear. A bit of space (gapping) over the horse's forehead is acceptable. We would rather your horse's browband be a bit too long than too short.



STEP SIX: Check the Length Of the Noseband

When the noseband is the correct overall length, the short brace piece below the crown piece will head in a relatively straight line at the corner of the horse's mouth. While this is an ideal length, we've found that the noseband can be just a bit shorter OR one-half to three-quarters of an inch longer and still function properly.

If the noseband is just a bit too short, the short brace piece of the noseband will head at the upper lip. The noseband on the horse in the photo is in the upper position and it fits this way—just a bit short (see the black arrows on photo). The horse, Meritaj, rode quite well in the bridle when it was adjusted this way.

It looks as if the bridle would also fit nicely in the lower position (one and one-half inches to two inches below where it is placed on Meritaj's face in the photo). In this case, the noseband would appear longer (it would wrap farther around the horse's face because the circumference of the horse's face tapers down as it gets closer to the mouth).

If the noseband is one-half to three-quarters of one inch too long, the line of the short brace piece will point at the horses' lower lip below the corner of the mouth. In most cases, the sidepull will work well in this position. If the noseband is way too short it will not work properly. In this case, the line of the short brace piece will point to an area above the upper lip, well above the corner of the horse's mouth.

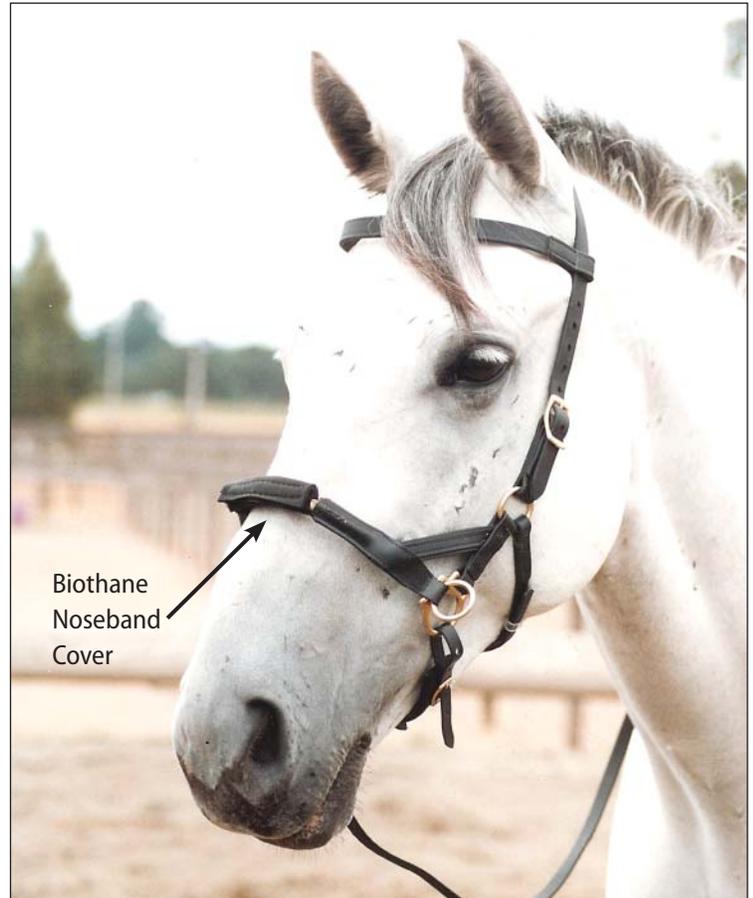
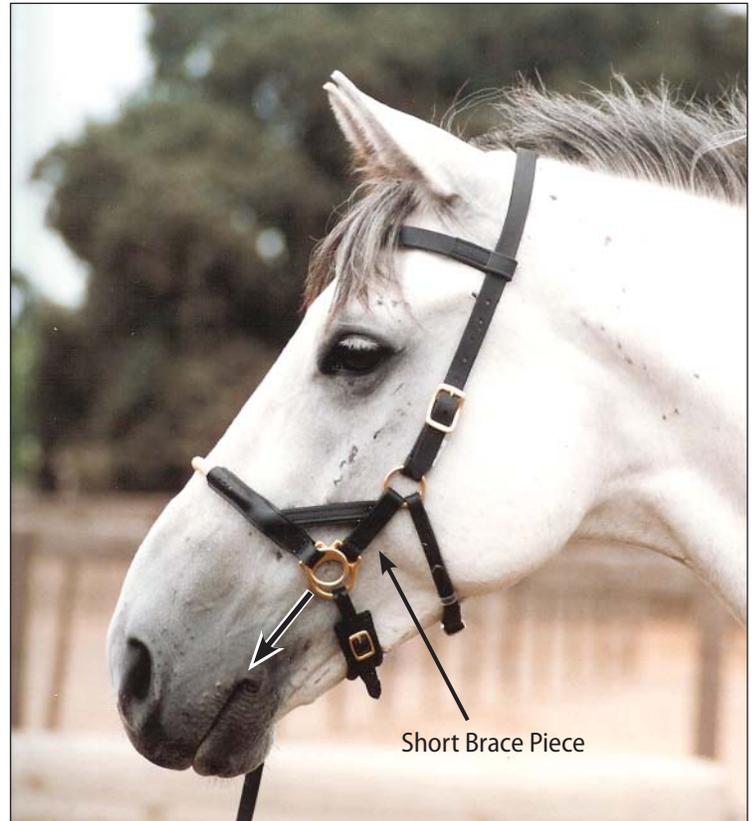
STEP SEVEN: Biothane Noseband Cover

The sidepull bridle comes with a biothane cover which fits over the uncovered rope part of the noseband.

If your horse is sensitive or afraid of pressure on his nose use the noseband cover on the rope part of the noseband. If the horse tends to pull against his halter when you lead him or lean on the reins when you ride him, put the bridle on without the noseband cover on the rope.

Some horses ride well with the biothane cover on the rope, others may get a bit heavy to turn and ride best when the rope is not covered with the cover. When Diana is not using the cover on the noseband, she wraps the cover around the jowl strap and fastens it with the velcro. When you put the cover on, lengthen the chin strap to allow for the extra bulk.

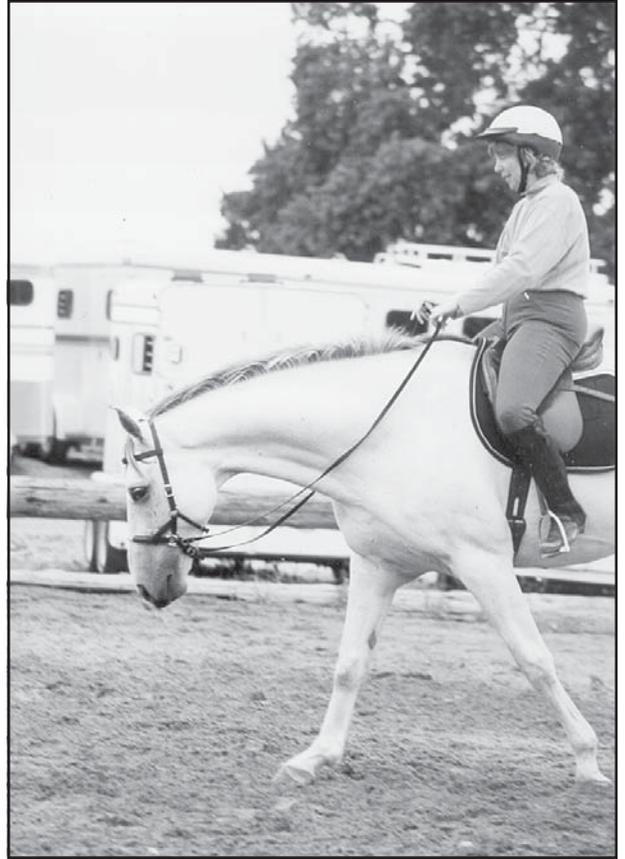
Note: Before you ride your horse in the sidepull bridle, see the groundwork and riding instructions on pages x to xx for exercises from Diana that help your horse understand the bridle.



STEP EIGHT: Check the Length of Your Reins

Whether you are riding in our matching reins or a set of reins you already own here is one way to check rein length. The reins should be long enough to allow your horse to stretch his neck down towards the ground without you leaning forward in the saddle and holding the very end of the reins.

The photo at right shows Diana riding Meritaj with reins that are too short. Meritaj is relaxing nicely and starting to lengthen his neck to stretch down towards the ground. It would be nice to allow him to stretch down even further. Unfortunately, Diana is holding the end of the reins and would need to lean forward to allow this to happen. Meritaj is a large warmblood gelding. Diana is using reins that are 10 feet long. It would be better to ride a horse of this size in reins that are 11 feet long.



DO ALL OF THE PARTS OF YOUR BRIDLE FIT?

SEND US THE PART THAT DOESN'T FIT AND WE'LL EXCHANGE IT

If the crown piece, browband, jowl strap, chin strap or noseband doesn't fit your horse, please call us or e-mail us and let us know what isn't working. Then, we can advise you regarding exchanging the part that doesn't fit for a different size. For example: if the browband is too short, send it back, tell us what length you need and we'll ship you a longer one.

THIRTY- DAY TRIAL

You're welcome to try out your bridle for 30 days. If the bridle does not meet your needs, ship it back to us (clean and undamaged) and we will refund your payment. We do not refund your shipping costs. **Note:** If there are any alterations (additional holes punched, etc.) or the bridle is not clean, a minimum handling/restocking fee of \$35.00 will be charged. If any parts need to be replaced, the cost of the part will be deducted from your refund.

CARE OF THE SIDEPULL BRIDLE

Diana Thompson's sidepull bridle is made of Beta biothane material, a nylon rope and brass fittings. It is very durable.

You have several options for cleaning the bridle. You can put the bridle in a bucket of water for an hour. Once the dirt softens, it should rinse right off the biothane. You can also put the bridle in a sink of slightly soapy water and let it soak, then rinse and dry. One other option, place it in the upper rack of a dishwasher and put it through a gentle cycle.

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR DIANA THOMPSON:

Phone: (707) 542-4646

E-mail: info@dianathompson.com

Website: www.dianathompson.com

Mailing Address: 2290 Woolsey Road,
Fulton, California 95439 USA