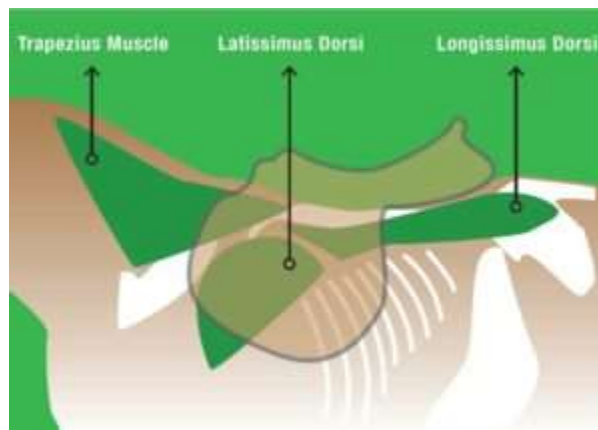


SADDLE FIT IMPACT ON TOPLINE



Poor saddle fit can be a symptom of a much larger issue. If the musculature of the horse's back/topline area is not full and rounded, expressing high quality of muscle, many times a saddle will not fit correctly. In these instances, riders may try to overcompensate for this deficiency by using extra padding and/or trying multiple saddles. Poor saddle fit can cause pain and soreness in the horse with pressure and points that may pinch and be uncomfortable. This pain and pressure can manifest itself in a poor attitude or poor performance. In addition, saddle fit issues may show up in irritability during tacking up, hesitation or refusals to take action on one side vs. the other (think leads, etc.) and overall unpleasant disposition.



While poor saddle fit can come from a variety of areas, including size, shape and defects of the saddle, one thing that should be considered is that the topline of the horse is lacking and therefore causing issues with saddle fit. In extreme cases, when topline scores have been improved from a low grade to an ideal grade, the fit of the saddle is enhanced to a noticeable extent. In the illustration below, you can see how the key muscles in the topline area may impact the way that the saddle sits on the horse.