



A Little Bit About The Bit Seat

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[Back to Articles...](#)

A LITTLE BIT ABOUT THE BIT SEAT

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One of the most frequently asked questions I hear from my clients is "what exactly is a bit seat?"

A bit seat is a very important application in equine dentistry with direct impact on a horse's performance. To apply a bit seat simply means to round the sides and front corner of the horse's first upper and lower molars. The name is somewhat deceiving because the bit does not actually sit on the molar itself.

All bits are designed to rest on the bars of the mouth in front of the first molar. The pouch of flesh that lies along the bars where the bit sits is quite loose and soft, and when a bit is positioned properly the soft cheek tissue is slightly gathered alongside the front upper molar. The enamel points of the molars create a rough, sharp edge and sharp corner on the first molars. When enough pressure is applied to the reins, some bits may actually come into contact with these teeth. More commonly, the soft cheek tissue and pouch of flesh is pinched between the bit and the sharp front molar causing abrasion and lacerations.

The horse's reaction to the pinch often results in rooting their nose forward, shaking their head or even just a subtle resistance to stay soft in collection in an effort to alleviate the discomfort. The proper application of a uniform bit seat is intended to keep the horse comfortable with contact on the bit in order to improve its performance.

No matter the discipline, I believe all trainers agree that supple head carriage is an integral part of a horse's success, whether they are competing in a timed or judged event. A little bit seat could make a big difference to your horse!