

Riding To The Top

Helmet Fit and Care Guide

At RTT, we have always had helmets for clients to use and we will continue to do so. However, as we reopen, we are strongly encouraging individuals to purchase their own helmets in an effort to reduce shared equipment. To facilitate this we are working with Sammy's owner, Kathleen Fox, who owns Katahdin Trail Saddlery Tack Shop in Dexter, Maine and she is offering a very nice selection of helmets at a great price for Riding To The Top participants (clients, volunteers and staff). If you are interested, please look at the attached list of helmets, measure for size, contact Kate or Sarah for suggestions about models, and then send us your order information and payment. There will be a \$2.75 shipping fee for each helmet. All helmets will be delivered to RTT.

Helmet Fit

A well-fitting helmet is the best way to protect yourself from head trauma during a horseback riding accident. Helmets are designed to protect for **one impact**, that is, one fall from a horse or being dropped from a height onto a hard surface. This document contains basic guidelines, compiled from multiple sources, and is designed solely for the purpose of helping participants find, purchase, and care for well-fitting personal helmets. These are general tips and information and do not substitute having a helmet fitted and checked by a PATH Intl. Instructor. **All helmets used at RTT must be certified by both the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) and by the Safety Equipment Institute (SEI).**

1. Measure accurately

Helmet sizing varies between manufacturers. Measure and compare to manufacturer-specific size charts.

To measure, have someone else place a soft fabric tape measure snugly around your head at the widest point, about one inch above your eyebrows. Make sure the tape goes over the bump at the back of your head and that it is just above the top of your ears. If you have a lot of hair, pull it back into a low ponytail as close to the base of your neck as possible before measuring. It's important to make sure the measuring tape is as level as possible. Measure multiple times to make sure you get a consistent measurement.



2. Find a make/model that fits your head

Different helmets suit different shapes of heads. While you have someone measuring your head, have them look at the shape of your head from above to see if you have a rounder head (fairly even front to back and side to side) or an oval head (longer front to back and more narrow side to side.) Many helmets are designed for one of these two head shapes, so knowing general head shape will help you narrow down the choices.

Helmet Care

1. Age and Replacement

Now that you have a new helmet that has been fitted and approved by your instructor, write the date you start using it inside the helmet (on a tag with a sharpie, somewhere it won't rub away). This will help keep track of how long you have had the helmet, as the manufacturing date may be older than the actual length of use. **Helmets should be replaced after being in use for 5 years or after any fall with impact to the head.** Some manufacturers offer a warranty for replacing a helmet after a fall which may be something to consider when purchasing.

2. Care

Store your helmet in a cool, dry environment. Avoid keeping it in a car where it may get very hot or cold, or bounce around during normal driving activity. A bag for your helmet can help keep it protected from the elements or unnecessary drops. Severe drops onto hard surfaces can be cause for a new helmet, so treat your helmet like the valuable thing it is! Allow your helmet to air dry before stowing if it becomes sweaty. You can hand wash removable liners from time to time and clean the exterior with soap and water or ArmorAll, depending on the material. Avoid strong chemicals on all helmet components as they can compromise the helmet's integrity.



use your head

DO THE FIVE-POINT SAFETY CHECK

when selecting your riding helmet.

1. FRONT

The helmet should sit firmly in place about an inch above the eyebrows.

More than 1" = too small.
Less than 1" = too big.

2. SIDE

The straps on the side should meet just below and in front of your earlobes.

3. BACK

A snug-fitting helmet is best. The harness on the back should prevent the helmet from moving forward. Avoid using your hair to create a proper fit.


4. THROAT

The strap under your chin should be snug but not tight. Tilt your chin up and down to ensure a proper fit.

5. TEST

Grasp the helmet with two hands and rock it back and forth. The skin and eyebrows should move with the helmet.



 Penn State Extension

Always choose to wear
a certified riding helmet.



No helmet can protect against every head injury. However, studies show a dramatic reduction in the severity of injuries when a properly fitted helmet is worn every time you ride a horse. Replace your helmet every five years or immediately after a direct impact from a fall.

extension.psu.edu/4-H

This publication is made possible through Pennsylvania 4-H educational materials fees.

Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences research and extension programs are funded in part by Pennsylvania counties, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Where trade names appear, no discrimination is intended, and no endorsement by Penn State Extension is implied.

This publication is available in alternative media on request.

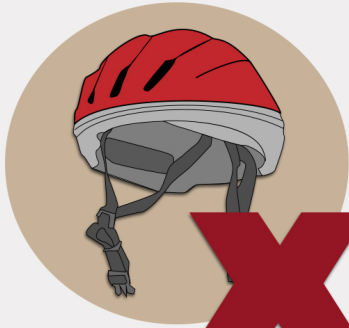
Penn State is an equal opportunity, affirmative action employer, and is committed to providing employment opportunities to all qualified applicants without regard to race, color, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability, or protected veteran status.

© The Pennsylvania State University 2019

Code 5533 01/19

PROTECT YOUR HEAD

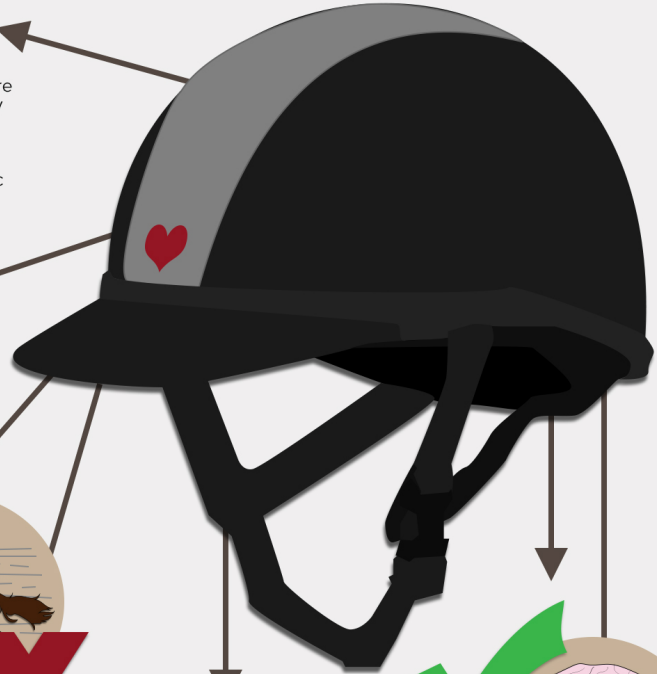
GET THE FACTS!
Is your head protected?



MYTH: Bike Helmets are safe for riding horses

While cycling helmets can look similar to some styles of riding helmet, they are not built to the same design and safety standards as equestrian helmets.

Equestrian helmets are rigorously tested to protect against riding specific accidents, and offer added protection to specific areas, such as the back of the head.



FACT: Helmets should always be replaced after a fall.

If your helmet takes any impact after a fall, regardless of how hard, it should be replaced. Just because there is no visible crack or break does not mean that the impact from your fall did not cause an invisible defect that could result in less protection if you fall again.



MYTH: Speed increases risk of injury.

While the speed you are traveling while riding is a factor, the risk of injury is much more significantly worse if you are further away from the ground.

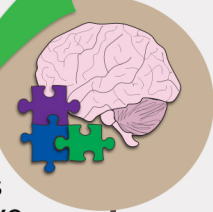
No matter what speed you are going, a fall from over 2 feet above the ground can cause severe injury.

FACT: Head injuries are cumulative.

The more hits your head takes, the worse it is.

Research has shown that a head injury can be made significantly worse if you have a history of similar injuries.

Multiple concussions can do long term damage to the brain.



MYTH: More expensive helmets are safer.

All ASTM/SEI certified helmets go through the same approval process. Higher priced helmets may give you more padding options, different materials, and alternate styles, but they still provide the same level of safety as other certified helmets.



FACT: All riding helmets should be ASTM/SEI approved.

A properly fitting ASTM/SEI approved helmet can prevent death and significantly reduce the severity of injury sustained due to a riding fall or head impact.

Helmets that carry an ASTM/SEI certification have passed thorough testing to prove that their design is safe, and will minimize or prevent riding related injury.

FACT: Fit is everything.

Not only is it important that your helmet is approved, but it needs to fit properly to be effective.

A helmet must be firm but comfortable, should not easily shift forward or back, and the chin strap should be snug. A properly adjusted strap should sit against the chin directly below the ear.

