

Storing Your Harness

Obviously, once you own a harness(es), you need to store it somewhere and somehow. Here, we will highlight some ways to store a harness properly to maintain its shape and condition. The main aspect is that the harness is not creased in any way for any length of time.

Ideally, leather harnesses are kept in a climate-controlled area, but we know that for most people, that isn't possible. Given the choice, I would opt for less than more heat. Bringing a harness into a warm, heated house will dry it quickly, and it will have to be conditioned more often. Less heat in the winter risks the potential of mold and mildew from dampness, so we have installed a bathroom exhaust fan in our semi-heated tack room that is connected to the light switch. A ceiling fan can be good as well. Cool and dry is best.

Everyday Storage

Some harnesses are used quite regularly, especially if you like to drive often. We hang our harnesses on racks in our tack room. My husband has made wooden ones, but we also sell metal, powder-coated racks.



Complete harness hung on rack.
Crupper should be buckled.



Harness Rack

The saddle goes on the top with the front of the saddle near the wall. This keeps the saddle supported so the skirts maintain their shape. The breeching rests on the rack in front of the saddle. The breast collar is on top of the breeching with the traces circled around to wrap back over the rack if they are too long to hang straight. The crupper should be buckled, or at least the near side put in the keeper to maintain its shape.



Bridle on rack with
caveson buckled.

The bridle should have a rack with a rounded top to maintain the shape and not crack the crown. The caveson (noseband) should be buckled or at least put in the keeper so it doesn't hang by one side and get contorted and/or cracked. Reins, if attached, can



Bridle Rack

hang over the bridle or on a rack of their own. Bits should be removed for long term storage, so as to not stretch the leather.

Full collars need a rack of their own, and should be hung from the bottom of the collar (upside down) with the top fastened.



Full Collar Rack

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Temporary Storage



Some harnesses need to be more accessible than in the tack room, such as when you are tacking up or at a show. In these cases, portable harness racks are handy. We have wooden ones for our barn, and we also sell convenient collapsible racks that can be hooked over a stall wall. We do not recommend these racks for long-term storage, as they do not give any support to the parts of the harness that need it.



Long-Term Storage

Certain situations may require you to put your harness away for a while, such as a good show harness that is saved for that purpose. Make sure the harness is clean and conditioned. You will need to dismantle some additional pieces from your everyday storage technique so that you don't get creases and/or cracks. The breeching and the hip strap should be taken off the backstrap. The breast collar should be taken off the breast collar strap. These pieces should be laid over the harness rack. I like to cover the whole harness with an old towel(s) before covering that with a plastic garbage bag. The towels and bag just drape over the harness, leaving the bottom open. This keeps dust off without trapping moisture.

Show Storage and Transport



Comforter Storage Bag

When I clean and polish a brass harness for show, I like to dismantle it, wrap it in towels or old sheets, and put it in comforter storage bags. Just make sure the bag for the saddle is large enough not to fold the skirts. Putting the harness in these bags keeps the brass shiny and easier to wipe down before the first class, keeping away air and humidity that tarnishes brass quickly. We also have harness storage bags that work nice for transporting harness in a clean case, but we do not recommend either method for long-term storage, because, again, it doesn't provide the necessary support for the harness.



Harness Bag

Final Thoughts

We are not big fans of storing harness in a suitcase or a box-like tote, because again, there is more chance of creasing the material being stuffed in a suitcase. The most damage I have seen from this arrangement is the saddle skirts having wrinkles in the patent leather from being stretched and bent around to fit in the box. The blinkers also can be damaged quite easily. Give your harness the support it needs. Hang it up!

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