

Show Ring Attire for the Saddleseat Rider

Saddleseat attire was originally based on men's business suits that were altered to allow a flattering and comfortable fit while on horseback. This guide explains what is the most traditionally acceptable form of show ring attire for the saddleseat rider, regardless of the breed being ridden. Some of the attire listed here may be optional (please check your breed rule books) but showing the judge that you've made the extra effort may be the difference between a first and second place finish.

General

Always show respect to your judge by keeping a neat, clean appearance in the show ring. Keep your boots and the bottoms of your pants clean and your hair well groomed. This goes for your horse too! Your riding attire should be well fitted with no gaps or folds. All pieces should be as snug and tailored as possible without causing restriction or discomfort.

Fit Guide (for men and women)

Jacket-overall length should fall near the back of the knee. Sleeve length should extend past the wrist bone when standing to ensure proper length when riding. No gaps or wrinkles of material should be present. Jackets should be tailored enough to smoothly fit the rider, providing just enough freedom of movement to ride comfortably. All jackets should have a matching lining. Light colored linings are also acceptable, depending on current trends.

Jodhpur Pants-length should extend past the heel of the boot when riding, only the front of the boot should be visible to the judge. When riding, pants should fit like second skin, fitted from waist to lower calf, then finally flaring out from lower calf to the bottom. Be sure pants do not fit snug while standing, riding position takes up a lot of space.

Underpasses are the elastic straps that button to the bottom of the pants and pass under the boots. These must be snug to ensure the pants do not work their way up the leg and create wrinkles when riding. The only place wrinkles on the pants should be present are at the back of the knee.

Vest-should fit snugly enough to prevent bulk under the jacket and must be long enough to cover the waist of the pants.

Shirt-should fit snugly enough to prevent bulk under the jacket but must provide enough room for freedom of movement.

Hat-should fit snugly enough not to fall off at your highest riding speed. Should be positioned just above the eyebrows. If you place your thumb sideways above your eyebrow, your hat should touch the top edge of your thumb, your eyebrow should touch the bottom.

Choosing the Right Style

Men's Daywear

3-Piece Suit-(jacket, pants & vest) in dark colors like black, navy, browns or grays. Solids or a herringbone, pinstripe or windowpane pattern is fine as long as they appear solid from afar. Jacket must have a notched collar.

Shirt-usually a plain white button down, but pastel colors that coordinate with the suit have also become popular.

Tie-should be a standard necktie that coordinates with the suit, tied in either a half or full Windsor knot with a dimple in the middle. Plain or conservatively patterned ties are acceptable. Bowties are unacceptable.

Hat-can be straw, wool, felt, or fur blend. Style should be snap-brim or fedora type. Black is the most common but navy, brown, or a color custom dyed to your suit is equally acceptable.

Boots-should be smooth leather (not patent), slip-on style with elastic ankles in black or brown, whichever best matches the suit. Trim over the toe area is not acceptable.

Gloves-usually black, but as with boots, another color that matches your suit is fine.

Women's Daywear (2 Options)

Option 1

3-Piece Suit-see men's 3-piece suit details, then follow guidelines below for attire other than jacket, pants and vest. Also, if you are showing in equitation classes, you should be wearing this type of suit.

Option 2

Daycoat-jacket should be in a color that best compliments your horse. Bright, striking colors that draw the eye towards you are generally best, but dark horses usually also look very nice in pastels. Daycoats may be made from almost any fabric, including silk. Colors can be solid or patterned. Thicker stripes are still classic and polished looking, and therefore acceptable, but any prints or patterns that look busy are not acceptable. Daycoats must have a shawl collar.

Pants & Vest-should be of the same color. Black or navy are most popular but other dark colors can be used as well. Wearing a jacket, pants and vest that are all a different color will break up the flow of the rider's silhouette and it not nearly as flattering as using pants and a vest of the same color.

Hat-can be wool, felt, or fur blend. Style should be homburg or wide-brim ladies styles. Black is most common, but navy, brown or a color custom dyed to match a 3-piece suit is equally acceptable.

Shirt, Tie, Boots & Gloves-see men's details, they are the same for women.

Extras-earrings should be studs that are of moderate size. Anything that dangles or hangs is not acceptable. Hair should be neatly groomed back. Long hair should be pulled back into a show bow or a bun and secured with bobby pins. Hairnets should then be worn to prevent flyaways near the face. Makeup should be darker than normal to prevent facial features from melting away at a distance.

Evening Attire for Men and Women

The formal suit is to be worn only after 6pm and is the same style for men and women.

Black is the most common, as it is meant to resemble a tuxedo. Navy and chocolate brown are also acceptable, but have become less popular and are now very hard to find.

Jacket-any type of suiting fabric with a full satin lapel and shawl collar. Ladies also have the option to wear a silk jacket in a plain tasteful color and/or conservative pattern. Silk daycoats are acceptable here, as is brocaded fabric.

Pants-suiting fabric with a satin strip down the outside of each leg.

Vest-tuxedo style vest that closes behind the neck, white in color with white patterns or embroidery. A satin cummerbund in a plain, dark color may be worn in place of a vest.

Shirt-wing tip tuxedo shirt with black buttons.

Tie-silk bowtie in a dark color (to match cummerbund.) White bowties are also sometimes encouraged.

Hat-silk top hat to match suit color (usually black.)

Boots-same style as daywear, but in patent leather and a color to match the suit (usually black.)

Gloves-white leather is the most appropriate, but is very hard to pull off unless one has very steady hands. A color to match the suit is acceptable.

A white flower should be pinned to the left lapel.

A Few Quick Tips

When riding, flip the bottom of your jacket back over your legs to expose the lining. This creates a nice flowing look. Do not pin the jacket back. When pinned, it cannot move and flow the way it is intended to.

Your riding ensemble should match your horse's browband and braids to pull the entire look together.

Always carry a long-sleeved button down shirt. If it gets hot and the judge allows you to ride without a jacket, you must have a long-sleeved shirt to do this. If you only have short sleeves, your jacket should remain on.