

SADDLE SORES



Saddle sores, what are they?

- Skin lesions that occur in the area of the body in contact with the saddle (1)

Sores develop following microtrauma to the skin caused by pressure & friction during cycling (2)

Good to know...

- Saddle sores are common in both recreational & elite level cyclists (1)
- Due to heat & moisture when sweating they may become infected & can become a chronic issue (1)
- They often recur on the same side

COMMON CAUSES (1, 2, 3)

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chafing • Intrinsic asymmetries: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ lower body mobility ◦ lower body strength ◦ posture ◦ leg length difference | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extrinsic asymmetries: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ bike setup • Unstable feet: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ shoe setup ◦ cleat position |
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PREVENTION (1, 2)

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce risk of chafing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ well-fitting chamois ◦ avoid bunching fabric ◦ No underwear ◦ Chamois cream for longer rides or when out in the rain | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replace old chamois promptly to ensure sufficient padding • Good hygiene habits • Address asymmetries |
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TREATMENT (1, 2, 3)

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early reporting to coaches • Review with doctor as steroid cream / antibiotics may be needed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pay particular attention to good self & kit hygiene to help prevent & manage infection • Address all points on 'prevention list' above |
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SADDLE SORES

HYGIENE



Good levels of hygiene will:

- help prevent & manage saddle sores (1, 2)
- help prevent & manage infected saddle sores (1, 2), thus limiting time spent off the bike
- help avoid the development of a chronic, long-term injury (2)
- keep fabrics & padding in good condition (4)

SELF (2)

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shower promptly • Wash well with body scrub or exfoliant | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't hang around in wet, sweaty kit |
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KIT (4)

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wash kit promptly after every wear to prevent sweat & bacteria build-up • Choose a 'delicate' or 'sport' wash cycle • Avoid washing with regular clothing items • If unable to wash promptly then hang to air-dry • Avoid leaving used kit in a bag or wash basket as residual bacteria will damage the fibers & will get deep within the pad • Replace old gear as the fabric is more likely to gather & padding may be worn | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To maintain the foam density in the pads and the elasticity of the technical fabrics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ choose 30°C wash temperatures ◦ use neutral, non-aggressive detergents ◦ avoid fabric softeners and fragranced detergents • Always drip-dry on a clothes line or clothes horse after a wash • Avoid radiators, dryers & ironing as intense heat will damage the pad & fabric |
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ASYMMETRIES



Rider & bike symmetry may help prevent & manage saddle sores, as well as other injuries (1, 2, 3)

Addressing asymmetries may be particularly important in the case of sores that recur on the same side (3)

Lower body asymmetries in the rider may contribute to uneven pressures on the saddle & should be addressed first (3)

Discuss with coaches when considering extrinsic/bike factors to avoid a negative impact on efficiency or power output

INTRINSIC ASYMMETRIES

RIDER FACTORS

ASSESS LEFT V RIGHT (3)

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pelvis mobility • Hip mobility • Lower back mobility • Hamstring length & strength | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quad strength • Glute strength • Leg length • Single leg balance /proprioception |
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EXTRINSIC ASYMMETRIES

BIKE SETUP (1, 2, 3)

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handlebar position <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ If reach is too long or wide it can increase the weight on the nose of the saddle & reduce pelvic stability • Insufficient stance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Too narrow reduces stability | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saddle height <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Too high may tilt pelvis to dominant side • Cleat placement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Further back can increase pelvic stability • Well fitting shoes can increase pelvic stability |
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SADDLE SORES

SADDLES



A change of saddle may help when trying to prevent or manage saddle sores (2, 3)

Always discuss with coaches when considering a change of saddles

When considering a saddle change ensure other factors have been considered:

- Better fitting chamois (1, 2, 3)
- Bike setup, particularly saddle height & tilt (3)
- Asymmetries, particularly if there are recurrent issues on the same side as the saddle will most likely be symmetrical (3)

HOW TO CHOOSE A SADDLE (3)

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider saddle design, the shape & the amount of padding • Gel padding is preferable over foam padding | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider male & female specific saddle options such as central cutaways, snub nose & rear width • Trial & error for individual comfort |
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OTHER CONSIDERATIONS (3)

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check saddle condition regularly • Has a saddle become twisted or bent? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ One side or rail may have collapsed or bent causing a change in saddle pressure distribution • Saddle height <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Too high may tilt pelvis to dominant side | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saddle tilt <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Majority of saddles designed to be used level ◦ Upward tilt may cause/aggravate saddle sores ◦ Downward tilt of 1-2 degrees may reduce incidence & symptoms of saddle sores ◦ Ensure <u>UCI regulation compliance</u> on tilt angle |
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