

CHOOSING THE RIGHT CHEEK for your BIT

The mouthpiece is the most critical part of the bit for the horse, whilst the cheek style can have more to do with the rider's discipline. However, the cheek does have some effect on the bit's action:



Fig. 1.

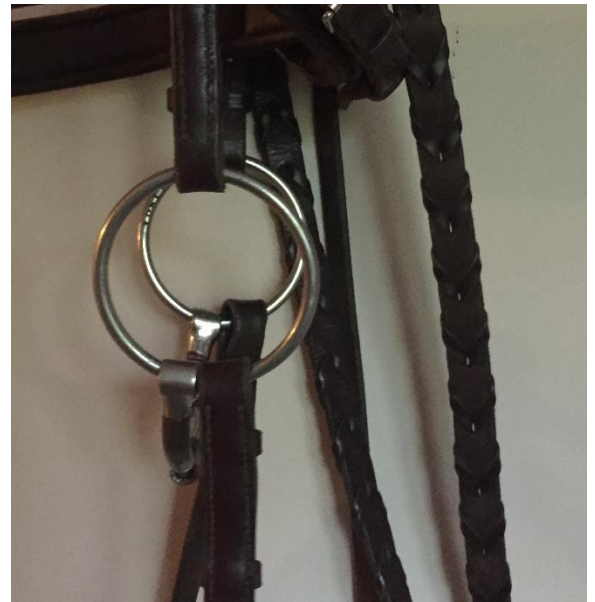


Fig. 2.

Figs. 1&2 show the difference in the way the mouthpiece lies in the mouth, depending on whether the cheek ring can rotate through the cheek pieces (eg with a Plain Eggbutt, or a Loose Ring), or whether it is anchored into the bridle, (eg with a Hanging Cheek; or an Eggbutt with Hooks.)

With a Loose Ring (Fig. 2.), the mouthpiece will also slide downwards to the lowest point on the Ring.

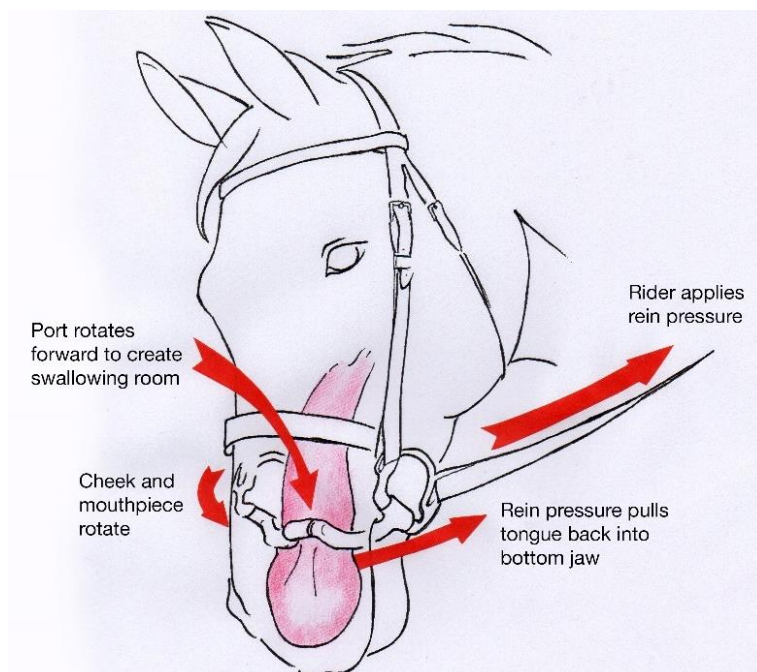


Fig. 3.

This shows the effect of leverage (eg from using the rein hook; or the curb rein of a Pelham). The leverage from the rider's hands (which are above the level of the mouth) acts below the mouthpiece, causing the port to rotate forward away from the tongue and then down. Leverage allows more movement with less force.

Hanging Cheek



This anchors the bit to the cheek pieces, so stands the bit up in the mouth, rotating the mouthpiece up off the tongue when the rider relaxes the contact. This gives the horse a clearer reward. The reins will slide up the cheek rings to a certain extent, but the Hanging Cheek does allow a small degree of downward rotation of the mouthpiece, moving the port away from the tongue and facilitating the Independent Side Movement. It also applies a small amount of poll pressure.

Plain Eggbutt

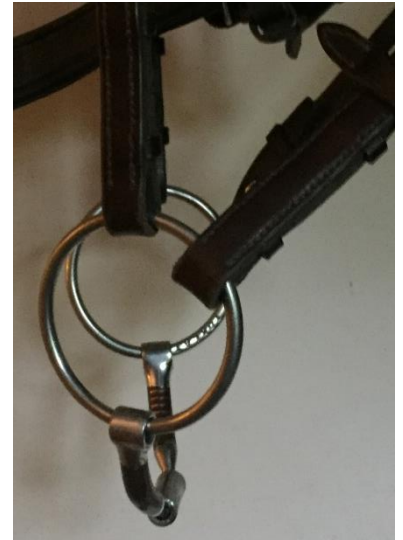


The cheek rings will slide through the cheek pieces of the bridle, letting the port rotate down to create some tongue room, whilst rest of the mouthpiece will lie on the tongue. The reins will slide up around the cheek rings so that any downward rotation of the mouthpiece is minimal.

Loose Ring



The mouthpiece on a loose ring slips down around the cheek rings, following gravity to rest on the tongue, but this will also angle the port forward, creating some tongue room. The reins will also slide up around the cheek rings. The Loose Ring is the cheek which offers the least downward rotation of the mouthpiece, so it can be a good choice for a horse that doesn't need downward pressure.



The reins on a Loose Ring or Plain Eggbutt will slide up the cheek ring to make a straight line between the bit and the rider's hands. This minimises any leverage, - so the downward rotation of the mouthpiece is reduced, and the action goes directly from the rider's hands back against the tongue.

Eggbutt with Hooks



The top 'hook' works like the Hanging Cheek, standing the bit up in the mouth and rotating it up off the tongue when the rider relaxes the contact, thereby giving a clearer reward.

Use of the rein hooks allows the rider to give more precise lateral aids: - optimising the Independent Side Movement and providing leverage, so that the rider can rotate the mouthpiece down with less backwards pressure.

The Eggbutt with Hooks has a hole or a loop just behind the top hook to facilitate the use of a curb strap, helping to balance the bit and allowing the rider to control the downward rotation of the mouthpiece. (See the Information Sheet: [Curb Chains on Myler Snaffles.](#))

This cheek is the most versatile of all the Myler Snaffles.

Pelham



The top rein acts just like a snaffle, whilst the bottom rein gives the rider leverage, so he can rotate the mouthpiece downwards and engage the curb chain. The bottom, or 'curb' rein therefore divides the pressure between the mouthpiece and the curb.

Use of "roundings", which convert the bit to use a single rein, does not properly combine the two actions, it basically turns the bit into a snaffle, minimising the downwards rotation of the mouthpiece and merely loosening the curb chain. The rider may just as well ride with the top rein only.