



MYLER BITS

LEVELS OF TRAINING AND BITS

Rather than just using one bit throughout your horse's working life, the Myler system is progressive and different bits may be required as your horse moves through his training. The bits are rated according to the horse's level of training:

The Myler approach is gradually to allow a horse more and more freedom from the bit as he progresses through his training, rather like allowing a child more and more responsibility. The Mylers point out that we do not communicate and interact with a small child in the same way we do with a teenager, or indeed another adult, so why should we seek to use the same communication tool throughout our horse's training?

The Mylers use 3 main levels to describe the stage the horse is at in his training and understanding. Myler Bits are grouped into 3 basic types of shape and action, as an indication of the kind of bit that would be the most appropriate for a horse at each particular level of advancement.

These levels are not definitive and a horse will straddle 2 of the levels for much of his career.

Level One:

A horse at Level One is at the beginning of its training, where basic balance and obedience is being asked for (eg. trot to walk, walk to halt, basic turning, etc.) and where few of the rider's body aids are understood.

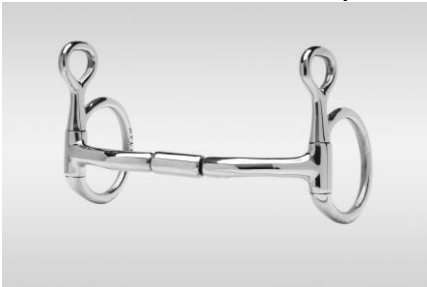


MB02, Comfort Snaffle, Level 1

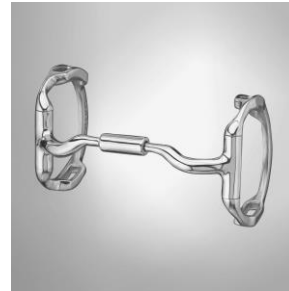
Level one bits use mainly tongue pressure, but also some bar pressure and, depending on the style of bit, some curb or poll pressure. A Level One bit uses the sensitivity of the tongue to give clear, concentrated signals at its centre, which can be released quickly and evenly when the horse does as he is asked.

Levels Two and Two/Three:

A horse at this stage has achieved a basic training, and is now progressing in a particular discipline, with a degree of balance and collection. He will be relaxed and flexed at the poll (ie on the vertical), and will be able to hold his outline when rein pressure is released. He will be stronger and able to sustain longer periods of work with better concentration and understanding. At this stage the rider wants to refine and define his aids for more precise work.



MB32 Mullen Barrel, Level 2



MB04 Low Port Comfort Snaffle, Level 2-3

Level Two and Level Two/Three Bits still use the tongue for signalling and control, but with a more subtle, spread pressure. The horse has shown that he can work without the concentrated tongue pressure of a Level One Bit, but it is still too early to release the tongue completely. Level Two bits spread the pressure across the tongue and Level Two/Three Bits have ports for more tongue relief. The bars, curb and poll may also be utilised to a certain extent and Independent Side Action becomes more important as the work becomes more complex.

Level Three:

The third level of training relates to “finished” horses from whom quite a high degree of collection and athleticism is expected. A Level Three horse will be relaxed and will work well off the rider’s seat, leg and hand.

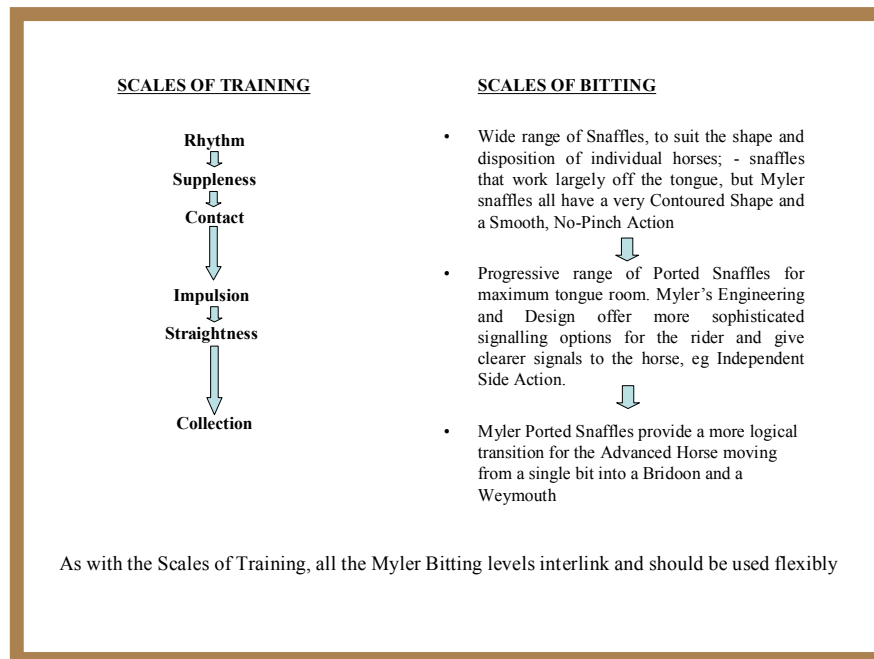


MB33, Low Medium Wide Ported Barrel, Level 3

Mouthpieces at this level give maximum tongue relief, working largely off the bars with a little poll and/or curb pressure, although the appropriate bit will depend very much on the horse’s temperament or disposition.

The Scales of Training

The Myler System reflects the Scales of Training because the bits progress as the horse progresses through his training. The horse's understanding develops as he moves on in his education, so it makes sense to reflect this in the way the rider communicates with him.



Most snaffle type bits are level 1, and if a horse is resisting a traditional snaffle, there is not much point putting him into a Myler level 1 bit, because it will act in a similar way, (albeit more comfortably). The horse is probably trying to communicate that he needs more tongue room, so a level 2 or 3 bit, depending on what stage he is at, would probably be more suitable.

Level of Rider

Don't forget that the rider's experience and skill should count for a lot in the choice of bit, especially in the cheek style selected.

No bit will hurt a horse without someone pulling on the reins!