

## Selle Anatomica X Saddle Adjustment Experience

By Don Buska (Revision 2.0, 7-Mar-2018)

Before installing your saddle consult the Selle Anatomica website and read their instructions on proper installation procedure. Damage to the leather is usually not reversible and can easily occur when improperly mounted and subsequently ridden.

I am a 150-155 lb rider, so accept these adjustment procedures with that in mind. Upon arrival I tighten (CCW on these saddles) the tension screw about two (2) complete turns. You will notice that it begins adding tension by the force felt while turning the screw. Yes I know they say they are adjusted at the factory, but the leather stretches from that initial tensioning just sitting in the box! During all adjusting monitor the spacing of the rear section of the saddle slot opening, where the slot side-to-side edges are closest to each other, to keep it at ¼". When mounting the saddle Selle Anatomica recommends that the front should be approximately ¼" higher than the rear. I stand the bike on a level surface and use a carpenter's level to set the front side ¼" higher. If you don't have a level just do your best visually. I find without this slight tilt upward I could feel myself sliding forward on the saddle while riding.

After riding the first 5 miles I get off and adjust the seat again for the aforementioned slot spacing. This too is often a two turn screw event. At the ten mile mark I again repeat the adjustment. Finally after around 20-30 miles I will do a final adjustment. After this point I usually check the seat every 100-200 miles and most often it needs much less adjustment after these initial "first ride" adjustments. I also find that once your saddle hits the higher mileage zone, above 500 miles, that slot spacing may no longer be a good indicator of leather tension. At that point you might want to give the tension screw an adjustment to see if it turns too easily, i.e. it's not really tensioning the saddle leather anymore. If that tension screw becomes really loose the "tension slide" will squeak as it moves freely, which you will notice on every bump!

I base these suggested adjustments on the experience gained with the five X saddles I currently have installed. Four of them are the Vintage TL (True Leather) X styles and the newest is a Vintage WS (Watershed) X type. All saddles adjusted the same. If you wait too long to make your initial adjustments you run the following risks:

- 1) The slots side-to-side edges will come in contact and even overlap each other. This will cause creasing and wearing of the leather at the contact point.
- 2) Your saddle will begin sagging excessively in the middle. Unless you're going for that hammock look!
- 3) Your saddle side edges may start flanging outward. Resulting in the rubbing to the insides of your upper thighs.

On my very first X saddle I experienced the first risk above after a twenty mile ride. Thankfully I was able to then adjust it back, but the damage to the slot edge leather will always be visible on that seat. I have one saddle that has experienced the three cases listed above. However, that seat was bought used off eBay and I didn't realize how poorly the previous owner had treated the saddle before it arrived. Also, that previous owner made another major mistake - On one of the Selle Anatomica webpages they mention

that the saddle should NOT be mounted all the way back. The seat mount clamps should be offset at least 1" from the front of where the saddle rails allow the mounts to be set! Why Selle Anatomica doesn't paint a warning marking on the rails I do not know – but they should. The aforementioned poorly adjusted seat also came to me with bent rails since that rider mounted the seat clamp all the way to the front of the saddles rails (saddle slid as far back as possibly). Thankfully I was able to bend the rails back in my vice, but some stretch damage to the leather was already done!

With the exception of the used poorly adjusted and mounted saddle I got off eBay the other four saddles have been fine. A couple of them have thousands of miles on them now. Most of them still have over  $\frac{3}{4}$ " of adjusting screw threads left too. That poorly adjusted seat I bought used and my very first seat are down to around  $\frac{1}{4}$ " of adjuster screw threads still visible.

I love my Selle Anatomica saddles and I hope the company stays around for a long time. After a recent century ride I had absolutely no butt pain during the ride or after. Their website is a bit weak on direction and specifications. There are some pages that don't agree with other pages on specifications. I have even seen that things change without significant notice. Also, the seats have changed over the years. One gentleman I recently rode with had an early WS (Watershed) X saddle and it was nearly 2" longer than the current X saddles. My preference was always for the TL (True Leather) Vintage X saddle, but they stopped production on those and now have a Vintage WS leather version. So my last version is the WS type. Hopefully in the future I will be able to write a comparison of the two leather versions. Albeit it would be a moot comparison as the full TL version is no longer made in any color! FYI, all saddles use TL for the laminate layers!