

**MEL** *Leming*  
**CONNECTING with HORSES**  
& riding with *Synchronicity*



**RIDING WITH** *Synchronicity*

**BALANCE SADDLES**



**I have recently taken on the role of 'Test Ride Facilitator' for BALANCE saddles in Australia. This means that you can now try the range of BALANCE saddles and test ride them, so you and your horse can assess and choose which is the ideal one for you both.**

You may already suspect that your current saddle is not supporting your horse's needs and need to find an alternative saddle, or you may just want to reassure yourself that your current saddle is the best option, by offering your horse a comparison. Either way I am now available to introduce you to the principles of the BALANCE approach to saddling and make it possible for you and your horse to investigate the way it all works. I have been using BALANCE saddles for about 6 years now and still have not come across a better saddle for horses and riders. They continue to impress me every time I ride in them and observe horses moving in them.

Having a saddle that is comfortable and allows a horse to lift his back and engage his hindquarters is imperative to a happy, healthy equine. It is so important that in the past I have frequently advised students not to ride in my courses but rather to put their money towards a better saddle, because in some cases no amount of instruction would have enabled them to resolve the problems they were having or achieve what they wanted to achieve. I knew that if they had a better saddle most of their problems would be resolved straight away.

This did not necessarily mean purchasing a BALANCE saddle because while that may be the most ideal option it is not always possible. By understanding the correct principles of saddle fitting people are able to sometimes improve their existing saddle through a better padding system or they may be able to purchase an alternative saddle in a lower price range. While these alternative saddles do not tend to have all of the horse friendly features found in BALANCE saddle they can be an improvement from the existing situations.



BALANCE saddle assessment sessions are essentially not about selling you a saddle but helping you to improve the saddle situation for your horse in what ever way it can be done, and in fact the BALANCE organisation provide a Distant Consultation service from their UK base which includes help for people who can't afford to buy a saddle from them.

The BALANCE saddles, of which there are numerous models, are the Rolls Royce of saddles and the founders of the BALANCE organisation have led the way in improving saddle design around the world and helping people look beyond traditional saddle fitting ideas which are often detrimental to the well being of horses. In general the design of saddles across the globe is improving so if we can keep educating people in how horses need saddles to be fitted we can keep improving things for horses more and more.

Following is some information about the BALANCE saddles taken from the balance **website [www.BALANCEinternational.com](http://www.BALANCEinternational.com)**

All BALANCE saddles are designed to be 'horse shaped' using extensive feedback from real experts in horse comfort, namely horses. These saddles are not just another human being's idea of what is appropriate for the horse! BALANCE know from experience that their Saddles and Saddling System help the ridden horse. They also appreciate that, unless the rider likes the saddle, it is unlikely that their horse will be allowed to have one! For this reason, much time and effort has gone into producing a full range of saddles suitable for all levels of rider and all disciplines.

**Certain features run throughout the full range of BALANCE saddles:**

- BALANCE Saddles are built on a variety of specially designed trees.
- They are relatively flat in the seat to avoid fixing the rider.
- They have 3 widely spaced girth straps

(billets), each on separate webs, to give a good distribution of pressure along the length of the tree. This arrangement also helps to accommodate different girthing positions needed by certain horses.

- The panels create a generous bearing surface and a springy, well cushioned feel for the horse.
- ALL BALANCE saddles have a generous gullet (channel) to protect the horse and allow for natural, healthy movement.
- ALL BALANCE saddles have adjustable/removable knee blocks.

The BALANCE Saddling System consists of specially designed saddles and pads which, when used together in the way advocated by BALANCE, form a comfortable 'flexible' and innocent interface between the horse and his rider. The aim being that the saddle keeps out of the way of the interaction between the horse and rider as much as possible, whilst still providing comfort and support in the form of good weight distribution and clear kinaesthetic reference points.



The BALANCE Saddling System alone provides a comfortable saddle that is easy for the rider to adapt to the changing needs of an individual horse or for the needs of a number of different horses, if required. However, horses and riders get the most from the BALANCE Saddling System

when it is seen as just a small part of a supportive environment where they can live, learn and grow together. In other words....part of a more holistic model of horse care.

In this kind of environment the horse's carer looks at all the influences on the horse from feed, hoof care, stable management, pasture management, dental care, saddling and of course, the riding itself. The aim being to create a dynamic, supportive and stimulating 'playground' for horse and human to explore their relationship.

When the founders of the BALANCE organisation started studying the impact that saddles have on the horse they soon realised that along with the impact that riding itself can have, the effect of a saddle that interferes with the natural range of equine movement has alarmingly far reaching consequences. An increasing number of Veterinarians, Physiotherapists, Chiropractors, Osteopaths etc. etc. are becoming aware of how often they get called in to identify and treat damage that is related, directly or indirectly, to the saddle. Some common problems that can be linked to direct, or indirect, saddle interference are:

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|--|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of engagement</li> <li>• Inability to collect</li> <li>• Cold Back Syndrome</li> <li>• Bolting</li> <li>• Lumps in saddle area</li> <li>• Rearing</li> <li>• Rubs in saddle area</li> <li>• Bucking</li> <li>• White Hair in Saddle area</li> <li>• Short strides</li> <li>• Horse on Forehand</li> <li>• Croup High Posture</li> <li>• Stiffness, Lack of Bend</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Locking Stifle joints</li> <li>• Horse above bit</li> <li>• Hock lameness</li> <li>• Tension</li> <li>• Corns</li> <li>• Bad Behaviour</li> <li>• Collapsed Heels</li> <li>• Resistance</li> <li>• Toeing In</li> <li>• Unsettled in Mouth</li> <li>• Toeing Out</li> <li>• Interference</li> <li>• Respiratory Problems</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General Hoof Imbalance</li> <li>• Dragging Toes</li> <li>• Kissing Spines</li> <li>• Tripping</li> <li>• Colic</li> <li>• Stumbling</li> <li>• Tying Up/Azoturia</li> <li>• Reluctance to go or jump down hill</li> <li>• Sway back</li> <li>• 'Carelessness over fences'</li> <li>• Hanging on one side of the bit</li> </ul> |
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This list could be longer but hopefully this will give you an idea of how important this issue is. When you appreciate the saddle related restriction and discomfort that many horses have to endure for years, it is amazing that they allow humans to climb on their backs at all, let alone perform. BALANCE would like every ridden horse to have the opportunity to experience what it feels like to have a human partner on his back whilst free of discomfort and restriction.

The BALANCE Saddling System has a growing reputation for changing horses with poor, or uninspiring movement into horses with generous, and even spectacular, movement. However, the reality is that the saddles cannot, in themselves, change any horses' movement. This simple and logical approach simply removes the blocks and obstacles from the horse and allows, with the support of the rider, his natural talents to come to the fore. More than anything else, the BALANCE saddles highlight how bad most other saddles are when it comes to servicing the horse's needs.

For more information about BALANCE saddles in Australia or to book a group saddle fitting demonstration or private saddle fitting session contact :

**Mel Fleming**  
*Connecting  
 with Horses  
 and Riding with  
 Synchronicity*

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**www.melfleming.com.au**



**For all enquiries and bookings contact Mel Fleming**

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 or go to website: **www.melfleming.com.au**

# The Ultimate

## HORSEMANSHIP EXPERIENCE

### COURSES 2008

#### Incorporating

- Connecting with Horses and Riding with Synchronicity
- Universal Energetic Bodywork with Mel Fleming & Tony Robinson

AUGUST

**MOONBI, near Tamworth, NSW - August 2nd**  
**Open Format Workshop** There is no set format but I will coach individuals or groups with what ever you need help with

**MOONBI, near Tamworth, NSW - August 3rd**  
**Saddle Fitting Seminar and Test ride day for BALANCE Saddles**  
Contact Mel Fleming: mel@melfleming.com.au

**ORANGE/DUBBO, NSW - August 9th**  
**Balance Saddle Fitting Sessions and private lessons**  
contact Mel Fleming: mel@melfleming.com.au

**FORBES, NSW - August 10th**  
**Balance Saddle Fitting Sessions and private lessons**  
contact Julie Meek: happy.valley@bigpond.com

**MOONBI, near Tamworth, NSW - August 16th-18th**  
**Connecting with Horses & Riding with Synchronicity**  
3 days of group workshops with private lessons, Intermediate level

SEP

**ADELAIDE, S.A. - August 30th- Sept 1st**  
**Connecting with Horses & Riding with Synchronicity**  
Group workshops and Private lessons  
Michelle Wheaton michellewhelan@optusnet.com.au (08) 8339-2759

**CABARITTA, NSW - September 10th-14th**  
**Ultimate Horsemanship Experience 5 day course**

OCT

**MANSFIELD, VIC - October 11th-15th**  
**Ultimate Horsemanship Experience 5 day course**

**'BANYANDAH' HOWLONG, NSW - October 19th-25th**  
**Ultimate Horsemanship Experience 7 day course**

NOV

**MOONBI, via TAMWORTH, NSW- November 5th -16th**  
**Ultimate Horsemanship Experience 10 day course**

**MACKSVILLE, NSW - November 29th -30th**  
Group workshops and Private lessons and Balance Saddle Fitting  
contact Glenda Pate: glendapate@westnet.com.au (02) 6569-5137

DEC

**BAIRNSDALE, EAST GIPPSLAND, VIC - December 6th-10th**  
**Ultimate Horsemanship Experience 5 day course**

**For all enquiries and bookings contact Mel Fleming**  
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**02 6760 5519 or Int: +61 2 6760 5519**  
**or go to website: www.melfleming.com.au**