

All of the problems listed below have been cured, many times, by removing the bit. Dr. Cook invites purchasers of the Bitless Bridle to complete the first column of this research survey straight away, and the second column after they have used the bridle for a month or more.

Owner's name:
Address:
Tel #:
E-mail address:
NAME, age and sex of horse:
BREED or TYPE:
For how many years have you owned the horse?
Riding discipline (Pleasure, trail, endurance, dressage, combined training, etc.)?
Date on which questionnaire completed:
When did problems commence and what was the first problem?
In what month/year did you start using the Bitless Bridle?
Time interval since Bitless Bridle first used:
What bits had you tried before dispensing with bits altogether?
Is your horse also barefoot?
When (approximately) did you commence the barefoot program?
Have the changes noted above occurred during a period when the horse has also become barefoot?

Item	BEHAVIORAL PROFILE QUESTIONNAIRE	when bitted Y/N/NA	when bitless Y/N/NA
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In the following 100 or more line items, strike out any features that are not applicable, or annotate as necessary. If you need more space for comment, add a numbered note as an attachment to the questionnaire. Especially serious problems are printed in bold type.

	PAIN (expressed predominantly by various manifestations of FEAR)		
A	FRIGHT: Anxious, unpredictable, 'hot', nervous, fearful, shy, spooky, panicky, tense, stressed		
B	FLIGHT: Difficult to slow or stop, bolting, 'rushing the jumps,' 'running through the bit'		
C	FIGHT: Argumentative, confrontational, aggressive, bossy, cranky, surly, resentful, adversarial, angry		
D	FREEZE: Napping, 'herd bound', refusing at jumps, rearing, bucking, refusal to rein back, resistant, 'mulish'		

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MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS IN THE STABLE AND PRIOR TO RIDING			
1	Your horse is difficult to catch in the paddock (anticipating pain at exercise, but also perhaps because of head shyness from trigeminal neuralgia)		
2	Difficulty in putting the bridle on; holds head high, clenches teeth, panics at the very sight of a bridle, breaks out in a sweat		
3	Difficulty in taking the bridle off: horse fails to open its mouth, head jerks up and horse pulls away.		
4	Stand-offish in stable, unfriendly, pins ears, bites or threatens to bite. Turns head away and swings quarters around		
5	Runs wild on the lunge rein (with/without side reins) and may eventually fall, panics when lunged with a bit in the mouth		
6	Difficult to mount, fidgety, tense (neck braced, ears pinned), moves away prematurely, might even rear		
PROBLEMS THAT MAKE RIDING ITSELF MORE COMPLICATED, DIFFICULT, OR DANGEROUS			
7	Bucking or bounding and sometimes spinning. Often triggered by a request for an upward transition from trot to canter		
8	Rearing, with or without flipping over backwards (somersaulting). Potentially fatal to horse and rider		
9	Above' or 'ahead of the bit' (poking nose in the air), high-headed, 'star gazing, "braced,' avoiding the bit, hollow-backed		
10	Behind the bit,' 'overbent,' over-flexed, tucks chin into chest, 'spitting the bit,' 'over bridled'		
11	Grabs the bit,' i.e. puts the bit between the upper and lower first cheek teeth. The mouth will be open		
12	Hair-trigger response to the aids, hypersensitivity to the bit		
13	Atrial fibrillation; possibly triggered by dehydration from bit-induced sweating, & exacerbated by use of a diuretic (Salix)		
14	Lack of finesse in control, general 'unhappiness' when exercised		
15	Lazy, dull, tires prematurely, lack of 'life force,' subdued, ring sour, need for spurs		
16	Unfocussed, fussy, fidgety at work. Horse thinking of its painful mouth rather than where it is going		
17	Sweating excessively, hot and restless at exercise, "lathering-up"		
18	Lack of progress or slow progress in response to training, 'stagnation'		
19	During endurance rides, refusal, reluctance or difficulty in eating or drinking adequately because of the bit and perhaps a sore mouth also		
20	Ear pinning at exercise, threatens to bite other horses that come alongside, rarely pricks ears at exercise (see also line items # 39 and 43)		
21	Lip slapping (noisy flapping of lower lip) at work		
22	Napping (refusal or reluctance to go forward), 'herd-bound', 'freezing'		
23	Backing-up to avoid the bit ('sucking-back'). A habit of reversing rapidly without being asked		
24	Refusal to stand still, constant fidgeting		
25	Impossible to exercise by 'ponying' (as on the racetrack) because of pain in the mouth when led with a bitted bridle		
26	During arena or paddock exercise, repeatedly heads for the stable when passing by the gate		
27	When working or at rest, exhibits multiple wrinkles around nostrils and corner of mouth, pursed lips, lower lip tucked-up		
28	Uncooperative (not a 'team player'), regarding rider as an antagonist & nag rather than as a partner/leader		
29	Anxious expression in the eye, as evinced by a restless or staring eye, or by showing the white of the eye		
30	Crossing the jaw		
31	Fracture of the peak of the nasal bone or lower jaw from the too vigorous application of a mechanical hackamore		
FACIAL NEURALGIA (THE HEADSHAKING SYNDROME)			
32	head shaking, head tossing, 'flipping the nose,' (mainly at exercise & more often in summer)		
33	Rubbing muzzle or face on fore-leg, at & after exercise, striking at muzzle with fore leg during exercise		
34	Yawning during bridling or application of head collar (often accompanied by head tossing), yawning during or after exercise		
35	Blepharospasm (rapid and often noisy blinking) and/or photophobia (hypersensitivity to bright light)		

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36	Grazing on the fly' (eating on the run), grabbing at grass or snatching at the leaves of trees in passing (see also line item # 24)		
37	Sneezing & snorting		
38	Head shyness: Unwilling to have a hose played on its head, difficult to handle (or clip) around the mouth, ears or forelock		
39	Particularly 'difficult' on windy days, in bright sunlight, in the rain, or near trees		
40	During or after exercise, tries to bite at the shank of the hackamore, curb bit, reins, at the rider's boots, or a horse alongside		
41	Watery eyes and nasal discharge accompanying head tossing		
42	Coughing at the start of exercise, or coughing accompanied by headshaking		
43	Twitching of the cheek muscle (masseter muscle) on one or both sides (see also 'grinding of the teeth' on line item 67 below)		

BREATHING DIFFICULTIES, MOSTLY CAUSED BY THE BIT OBSTRUCTING THE AIRWAY AT THE THROAT			
44	An open mouth ('gaping') lets air into the oral cavity; one of a number of ways in which the bit causes ESP & DDSP		
45	Bit-induced poll flexion (nasal bone vertical to the ground or worse) obstructs the airway at the level of the throat		
46	Tongue 'behind the bit,' 'swallowing the tongue,' obstructs the throat and voice box (larynx)		
47	Tongue over the bit' causes loss of control but can also obstruct the airway		
48	Thick-winded', 'roaring,' laryngeal stridor; caused by elevation or displacement of the soft palate (ESP or DDSP)		
49	Dorsal displacement of the soft palate (DDSP), 'gurgling,' 'choking-up' or 'choking down.' Gagging/coughing reflexes		
50	Epiglottal entrapment; a sequel to open mouth and subsequent elevation &/or dorsal displacement of the soft palate		
51	Throat obstruction leads to dynamic collapse of the larynx and windpipe, and structural deformity of the windpipe ('scabbard' trachea)		
52	Asphyxia-induced pulmonary edema (pulmonary "bleeding" or exercise-induced pulmonary hemorrhage - EIPH)		
53	Explosive coughing at exercise as a post-operative complication of laryngeal tie-back surgery		
54	Thumps' (synchronous diaphragmatic flutter), e.g. from insufficient drinking on a trail ride; dehydration from use of a diuretic (Salix)		

PROBLEMS CAUSED BY DIRECT PHYSICAL TRAUMA BY THE BIT TO THE MOUTH			
55	Sores, chafes, cuts or loss of pigment at the corner of the mouth (angle of lips)		
56	Bruising of the gums at the bars or frank cuts; bleeding from the mouth		
57	Inappetence for a day or so after racing or other exercise, resulting from a sore mouth		
58	Dropping food from the mouth ('quidding') because of a sore mouth		
59	Ulcers inside the cheeks from sharp teeth (common).		
60	Bone spurs (mandibular periostitis) on the bars of the mouth (diagnosed by palpation &/or radiography)		
61	Compound fracture of the lower jaw from a loose horse treading on a trailing rein or from a fallen rider hanging on to the rein		
62	Star fracture of the bars of the mouth followed by death of bone and sequestrum formation		
63	Amputation of the tongue, partial amputation, or deep scarring		

OTHER PROBLEMS AFFECTING THE MOUTH IN PARTICULAR			
64	Hates the bit, chomping, chewing or clenching the bit, grinding the teeth (bruxism), constant fussing with the bit, 'busy mouth,' evading contact		
65	Tongue lolling, tongue protrusion at exercise and sometimes (more rarely) at rest. At exercise, often associated with 'tongue-over-bit'		
66	Pulling on the bit, 'hard-mouthed,' 'spoiled mouth,' especially when heading home, pounds of rein pressure needed rather than ounces		
67	Salivates excessively (because of counter-productive stimulation of digestive responses) froths at mouth, drooling and slobbering		

PROBLEMS THAT INTERFERE ESPECIALLY WITH A HORSE'S STRIDE			
68	Stiff-necked, 'lock jawed,' reluctant to flex at the poll, will not 'relax' or 'flex' the jaw' (i.e. open the mouth, something it should not do anyway)		

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69	Stiff or choppy stride ('bridle lameness'). Short stride giving slower speed		
70	Incoordination. The bit can cause signs that are easily mistaken for equine protozoal myelitis (EPM)		
71	Tilts head at exercise or refuses to keep head facing the line of travel. Accompanied by twisting of neck		
72	Stumbling, often accompanied by sluggishness & loss of interest in work		
73	Lacking in courage or confidence, not 'forward', refuses at jumps, lacking hind-end impulsion		
74	Heavy on the forehand, leaning on the bit, low-headed		
75	Difficult to steer in one or both directions or to travel straight, 'lugging,' 'bearing,' 'pulling in' or 'pulling out,' 'lugs on the bit'		
76	Fatigue &/or airway obstruction at speed leading to a fall that results in a broken leg (Thoroughbred racehorses in particular)		
77	Breakdowns (from premature fatigue triggered by bit-induced shortage of breath)		
78	Jigging, prancing, and 'rushing' when required to walk		
79	Refusal or difficulty in reining-back. Inability to rein-back in a straight line		
80	'Interfering' with hind hoof (hitting front hoof with hind hoof on same side)		
81	Inverted frame (high head carriage, hollow back), 'strung-out'		
82	Pig-rooting, 'gagging,' 'yawing,' diving with head or suddenly extending head forwards and snatching the reins out of the riders hands, 'yanking'		
83	Tying-up (muscle cramps, myoglobinuria, exertional rhabdomyolysis); thought to be caused in some horses by nervousness & stress		
84	Tail swishing or wringing ('flashing'), particularly when asked to canter or rein-back. Alternatively, tail clamping (sign of a rigid spine)		
85	Refusal or reluctance to change leads or to lead on one particular leg		
86	Dragging toes of hind feet, 'toe-scuffing'		
87	Reluctance to maintain canter		
88	A disconcerting trick of running into or close to standing objects (for example, poles in an arena) in an effort to dislodge ('rub-off') the rider		
89	False collection (from bit pressure rather than from hind-end impulsion), producing muscle cramps in jaw, neck, shoulder, back and quarters		
CAUSES OF SUDDEN DEATH			
90	A rearing episode can lead to a horse flipping over backwards and fracturing the base of its skull or breaking its back		
91	A severe episode of pulmonary bleeding can cause fatal asphyxiation		
92	Bit-induced partial asphyxia=premature fatigue in a racehorse=a fall=fracture of a long bone necessitating euthanasia		
93	Fatigue from the same cause can lead to a 'false step,' career-ending breakdown, and euthanasia		
EFFECT OF ALL OF THE ABOVE ON THE RIDER			
94	Self-evaluation of riding skills as 'poor' when, in fact, horsemeshould be blaming their 'tools' (i.e. the bit or bits)		
95	Development of a sense of frustration with apparent inability to master the art of equitation		
96	A burgeoning annoyance bordering on anger with the horse		
97	An increasing reluctance to exercise the horse on a regular basis and the generation of displacement activities (excuses)		
98	A loss of that sense of harmony between horse and rider that is so critical to all good horsemanship		
99	Riding ceases to give the rider (or the horse) pleasure		
100	Loss of confidence, fear of riding, and a decision to give up riding altogether		
102	Decision to sell or breed from a horse that appears to have incurable problems and to buy another for riding		
103	Economic embarrassment from doomed attempts to treat problems by means other than by removal of their cause, the only logical treatment		
106	Personal injury (anything from fractured collar bones to sudden death)		

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NOTES (including any additional signs): For example have ulcers on the gums or tongue been a problem?

To date there is no evidence to link wind-sucking or crib-biting as problems that might be caused by the bit but it would be worth noting the occurrence of such items in case a pattern of correlation could be demonstrated. The same applies to the problem of self-mutilation in the stall.

(NB: Repeat questionnaires are extremely valuable. For example, a questionnaire completed after, say, the first four weeks

SEQUENCE OF APPEARANCE OF THE PROBLEMS LISTED ABOVE: Information of special interest is the order in which problems occurred over a period of time. If possible, assign an approximate time-line chronology (1st, 2nd, 3rd etc) against the problems you have noted.

If the horse already had a collection of behavioural problems at the time of purchase, these should be flagged. If after you have observed the the horse for a time two signs appeared simultaneously, these might be marked with an equal sign.

SEQUENCE OF PROBLEM RESOLUTION: It would also be of interest to know in which order the problems disappeared on using the Bitless Bridle.

Questionnaires may be completed by computer and returned to drcook@bitlessbridle.com

or printed out, completed by hand, and posted to:

Dr. Robert Cook

206, Birch Run Road, Chestertown, MD 21620, USA

Tel: (410) 778 9005.

OFFICE USE ONLY

Major problems with bit:
Total number of problems when bitted:
Number of problems solved after using BB for months/years = (.....%)
Number of problems remaining after BB used for months/years = (.....%)
Number of problems that developed after using BB that were not present before

NOTES:

RECOMMENDATIONS:

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EFFECT OF BITTING OR BRIDLING PROBLEMS ON THE RIDER

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