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Saddle Stands

There are some dimensions here, but I'd generally like to have the pictures speak for themselves, and I'd add some observations on materials and assembly.

When the feed store started taking used saddles on consignment, they used folding metal saddle stands for their displays. But then, and reasonably, people wanted to sit on them. And the word "folding" became interchangeable with "collapsible." What's shown here (illus. 1 and 2) is maybe a little overkill in shine, but it's sturdy enough. I think I made them two. It's about 34-inches tall. Red oak strips (two feet long), pine otherwise, one-by-eights between feet and tops, a "homemade" 3/4 inch dowel for a halter hook, some kind of brass accent for bridle, a tray with one-by-four sides, a removable stick to hold a plastic tote. The one-by-eights come down to within 1/4 inch of the floor, and up to within 1/2 inch of the oak strips: glue and three screws hold each of the four joints. Don't skimp on overlap, don't skimp on glue.

On order of assembly:

Mark for, and drill three pilots in mildly triangular patterns through the one-by-eights for their heads and feet. Attach one head (glued) to its vertical with the center-top screw (two-inch drywall) first, then re-set the head for square-to-upright, then gently set the second screw, re-check the head for square-to-upright, and, if it's ok, then set the third screw. But if the second screw jumps things off-mark, withdraw that second screw, re-set the head for square, and then use the "third" screw hole: setting that screw (number three, set as number two) will keep the thing square even when you set the third and last screw (even though it began as number two). This has become kind of a "Who's on First" paragraph, but the process keeps alive the re-setting-to-square for as long as possible.

With glue and screws attach the foot to this upright, using the same "get it right" pattern.

For the second upright, do not glue right now, and only set the single center screws in both the head and the foot.

Attach the strips or boards (or whatever) that the saddle will rest on. I lean one upright against a nearby wall or table-leg, and prop the other against my leg.. Then I can rest the far end of the strip or board on something that's about the right height while I'm messing with the near upright. Use glue and screws (1 5/8 or 2-inch do alright).

I will attach the near end of a strip, and then its far end to the other upright, before I go on to the next strip. You've got a few minutes before the glue grabs very hard. If I'm using strips, I'll probably attach both of the outside strips, then both inside strips, then the middles for each side (so you can "split the difference" without measuring).

What you will discover is that, by the time the space is bridged between the heads, and no matter how carefully you have cut the tops of the heads for the strips or boards, this assembly of heads and top-boards has, unpredictably, skewed slightly. But you've taken that into account. You did not glue-up, and did not use all the screws for, one of the upright assemblies.

Because you aligned the elements of the first upright assembly perfectly (You had enough tries, you know what I mean?), now use it to make the second upright match its perfection. Remove the screw that holds the head to this second upright. Glue the surfaces, and re-set the screw. Roll the stand onto its back, or stand it on a table, because what you want to do is to sight up and down along the uprights to make them (appear) parallel to each other. Then set the second screw into the head. And then (all things being equal), set the last screw

Stand this stuff on a table known to be fairly true, flat, square, an averagely leveled playing field, whatever, when attaching the second foot. Withdraw the screw from the upright that has held the foot. Glue the surfaces. Re-set that center screw, and only then set the second and third screws.

At this point, you have by your process answered every gripe that the stand tips, rocks, sways, and "isn't right." Tell them their horse, and their saddle, both live in a barn, and what do they expect? It's real life, and that's a truth.

Beyond these observations on assembly, look at the other three pictures. All are between twenty-nine and thirty-six inches in height. The heads are between fourteen and fifteen-inches across. Feet are twenty or twenty-two inches across. One stand has one-by-eight for a top, with one-by-eight upright, a tray, and 2x4 feet (illus. 3). One has one-

by-three pine strips for a top, plywood uprights, and (I remember) a 2x4 stretcher, and 2x2 feet (illus. 4): Keri had needed a bunch of stands immediately, and I used whatever materials were at hand. I recycled an odd top somebody else had made, and one-by-six uprights with board-stretchers to make an acceptably wide tray, 2x2 feet (illus. 5).

There's also a shorter one for a youth's saddle, one-by-four top strips, head and feet emulating the fancy saddle stand, a 2x4 stretcher for a plastic tote. And even one very old stand only twenty inches tall, with relatively wide legs, and made to ride in the back of a pick-up (under a topper).

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