
Riding Leathers

by Amy Waller

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We know what the dragon wears to fly Threadfall but have you ever wondered what the rider would be wearing? Well, besides the riding belt. A rider's basic gear would consist of gloves, boots, pants, shirt, jacket, helmet and goggles. The main point of a rider's Threadfighting gear is to protect the rider's skin in the unfortunate event of Thread hitting the rider. Granted, Thread will eat right through even the thickest leather in a matter of seconds, but it is in those seconds when the rider and dragon could notice and jump between.

What many writers tend to forget is that riding gear is **hot**. It is almost entirely leather, and what isn't leather is wool. Even in a tropical climate like Kadanzer, the upper atmosphere, where the upper wings will be flying is going to be cold. However, on the ground it's still hot and wet. A rider isn't going to wander around in full riding gear if they don't have to. Maybe the pants and boots, but that is about it. Riding gear is also heavy. Thick leather plus fur, especially after Fall when the fur would be sweat soaked equals lots of weight. Yet another reason most riders would get out of riding gear as soon as possible and take a bath. Or a swim.

So, now that we've established that a rider isn't going to be wandering around in his/her riding leathers, what are these leathers and how do the riders get into them? Glad you asked.

Starting from the bottom up, let's first deal with boots. A rider would defiantly be wearing boots, with a heel, much like riding boots on earth. While there are no stirrups on riding gear, the heel still prevents the rider's foot from slipping through the toe loops. The boots would probably be midcalf height and tight. You wouldn't want them slipping during a Fall. In colder climates, the boots would be fur lined to avoid frostbite on the toes. All riders would be advised to wear the thickest socks possible, both to avoid the cold of flying high altitudes and to avoid the boots rubbing.

Next on our way up would be the pants. Now considering that the main idea of riding gear is to cover the rider as completely as possible, the pants would tuck into the boots. Since Pern doesn't have elastic, the bottom cuffs of the pants would lace up to keep them tight against the skin. Otherwise they might ride up in flight, leaving bare skin exposed to cold and Thread. Even with tightly laced boots, and especially with tall ones, pants that aren't tight will ride up and bunch, leaving blisters at best and skin exposed to between and Thread. Much like jodhpurs on Earth, there would be an extra layer of leather on the inner knee area to grip better and prevent wear and tear on the fabric of that section which would be in contact with the dragon the most. The riding pants may or may not be fur lined depending on the climate and the rider's tolerance to cold. If needed, a

rider may wear a belt to hold up his or her pants, but he/she would be advised to use the thinnest belt possible, since the jacket and riding belt would have to go over it.

Over the pants goes the undershirt. This would be a standard shirt a rider would wear normally, of whatever thickness the rider desires. A rider would tuck the shirt into the pants for appearances, and to help the shirt trap warm air against the rider's chest.

The jacket is the most important part of a rider's body gear. It would be long, probably a little past the hips, and worn over the pants, but under the belt. It would also be the thickest (and hottest) part of the outfit. It would have a high collar, up to right under the chin to prevent skin from being exposed. For warmth and security, the fastening would probably be buttons, off center, so there is a large overlap of fabric over the midsection, which is the most vulnerable part of the torso area. Sleeves would obviously be long, and worn over the gloves. To accommodate the stretching required, the front would be slit from the bottom hem to right above the belt area. This would allow the rider to comfortably ride his/her dragon while still providing extra protection to the upper thigh area. After that would come the riding belt, which has already been discussed in the [Riding Straps](#) article (available in the Kadanzer Weyr handbook).

The gloves themselves would be about the same thickness as the jacket, especially since manual dexterity isn't absolutely essential while fighting Thread. As long as you can catch a firestone sack, and feed the stone to your dragon, you don't need your hands for much. For the goldriders who need the dexterity to operate flame-throwers, the gloves would be thinner, and probably not lined. Goldriders fly at a lower altitude and don't need the same kind of protection from cold. Nor are they at as great a risk from the falling Thread.

Now that we have the dragonrider's body covered, let's move on to the head and helmet. Again, the purpose of Threadfighting gear is to cover as much of the rider's skin as possible; the helmet would cover not only the top and sides of the head, but probably the rider's mouth and nose as well. Several parallel slits in the area covering the mouth and nose would allow for breathing. A helmet would be fur lined as well. Thus it would be extremely hot, especially with a lot of hair. Thus, there should be very few dragonriders with hair longer than chin length, unless they were willing to suffer the heat.

The last part of a dragonrider's gear would be the goggles. Made of leather, with glass lenses, the goggles would probably sit very close to the rider's eyes to conserve the amount of leather needed.



Now that we know what a rider would wear, it is helpful to think about the order in which a rider would get dressed. Several articles of clothing would have to go on before others. So, in my humble opinion, this would be the

order for a rider getting dressed for Threadfall. Feel free to ignore it if you feel differently for your persona.

Step 1: Pull on underclothes, shirt and socks. All of these go under everything else.

Step 2: Pull on pants. The shirt should be tucked into the pants and the tops of the socks should be under the pant cuffs.

Step 3: Lace pant cuffs as tight as possible and pull on boots. This is probably the point at which the rider would put the riding straps on his/her dragon.

Step 4: Pull on jacket. Commence sweating.

Step 5: Fasten riding belt and pull on goggles, but do not place over eyes. Goggle would limit peripheral vision, so a rider shouldn't place them over his/her eyes before getting on the dragon.

Step 6: Pull on gloves, tucking ends under the sleeves of the jacket.

Step 7: Put on helmet Commence even more sweating.

Step 8: Mount dragon and pull goggles over eyes.

There you go, your dragonrider is now dressed and ready for Threadfall.



The tightness question.

How tight are riding leathers? We've all read stories where characters remark how good rider so-and-so looks in his tight riding leathers. Now this is the fictional world of Pern, and maybe they have invented stretchy skintight leather. If so, then sure, your dragonrider can parade around in her glorious skintight pants. I prefer to think of Pern as not having such things, and so thought about how riding pants would have to be to give the rider enough room the straddle a dragon (think elephant width, not horse). And so, once again, I compare riding pants with jodhpurs on Earth. Not the nice ones riders enjoy now that employ man-made fabric to stretch. No, I'm thinking about the old style ones with the baggy extra fabric around the waist and thighs. I suppose this could be an attractive look on some, but they certainly aren't skintight. Also, when on the ground, the crotch area would likely be a bit baggy to accommodate the stretching already discussed. They would be tight around the calves but not the thighs or rear.