

# SURCINGLE REVIEWS

## Everything You Need to Know About the Most Popular Surcingles in the U.S.

When looking for a new surcingle, remember there are many different styles as well as several different designers. Here are some key terms for handle shape that generally apply across all brands and makers:

**NEUTRAL GRIP:**

A curved handle shape allowing the vaulter to hold with "neutral" wrists and inspired by parallel bar grip from gymnastics, this design enables stronger holds in handstands and protects vaulters' wrists.

**L-HANDLE:**

Named for its 90-degree bend, these handles make an "L" shape when looked at from a bird's eye view. Many people also refer to this as a standard "square" handle.

**S-HANDLE:**

Named for its curvy shape, it is similar to the L-handle but instead features a smooth curving bend, like the letter "S".

SURCINGLE RETAILERS:  
**WHERE TO BUY**

**Lensing S, World Champion**

Voltigier Gurt: [www.voltigiergurt.de](http://www.voltigiergurt.de)

Pegasus Vaulting Supply: [www.pvsupply.net](http://www.pvsupply.net)

**Kristensen L, LV, and LD**

Kristensen Vaulting Supply:  
[www.vaulting-supply.dk](http://www.vaulting-supply.dk)

Pegasus Vaulting Supply: [www.pvsupply.net](http://www.pvsupply.net)

Skyline Equine: [www.skylineequine.com](http://www.skylineequine.com)

**Round**

Pegasus Vaulting Supply: [www.pvsupply.net](http://www.pvsupply.net)

Skyline Equine: [www.skylineequine.com](http://www.skylineequine.com)

Voltigier Gurt: [www.voltigiergurt.de](http://www.voltigiergurt.de)

Kristensen Vaulting Supply:  
[www.vaulting-supply.dk](http://www.vaulting-supply.dk)

When it comes to choosing the right surcingle for your vaulters and club, there are many factors to consider. How does this surcingle fit my horse(s)? How much does it cost? Is this surcingle good for compulsories? Freestyle? Team? Is it better for advanced vaulters? Beginning vaulters? What do I need to know before I buy it?

Surcingles are a big investment, so obviously it's important to choose the best surcingle for the vaulter, horse, and lunger alike. The surcingles detailed here are among the most popular models in the United States. Read on to discover which surcingle is best for you and your club.

### ROUND SURCINGLE

PRICE RANGE: \$300 and up

This surcingle has been the standard in vaulting since the 1960s and has remained a popular option for beginning clubs due to its low price point.

**Pros:**

**Inexpensive option for beginning vaulters and clubs-** Starting as low as \$300, this surcingle is an easy investment for a new club.

**Cons:**

**Challenging for larger vaulters-** Due to the small handle size, this surcingle presents challenges to vaulters over 100 pounds.

**Challenging for more advanced vaulters-** Without the neutral grip, round handles are quite limiting. This surcingle is ideal for trot and beginning canter vaulters, but not for vaulters at the bronze level and above.

**Challenging for swings and handstands-** Because there is no neutral grip, this surcingle is especially challenging for swings and handstands on top of the handles.

**Things to Think About:**

**Growing clubs and growing vaulters-** Vaulters quickly outgrow this surcingle, but it's always a great choice for beginners. For a surcingle a vaulter can grow with, opt for a Lensing or a Kristensen.

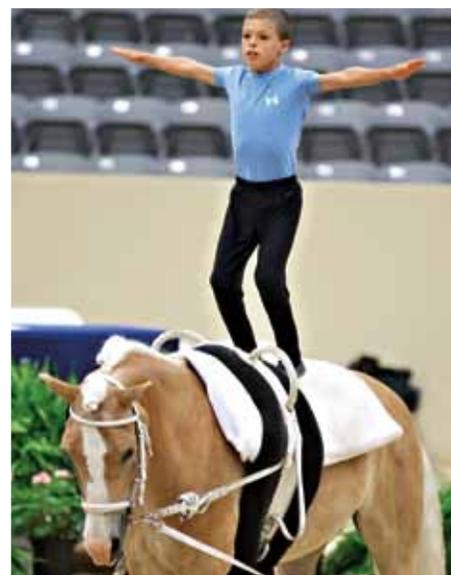


Photo courtesy of Lyme Over/VaultingPhotos.com

## KRISTENSEN L SURCINGLE

PRICE RANGE: \$1800 and up

Made by Meineke



**W**ith the original “square” handles designed by renowned lunger and trainer Lasse Kristensen, this surcingle sits low on the horse to create a stable, versatile platform for vaulting. With both neutral and forward grip positions, this surcingle is great for compulsories and freestyle alike. With smaller handles than the other Kristensen and Lensing surcingle models, the L is a great option for beginners, younger vaulters, and teams.

### Pros:

#### Great for swings and flight exercises-

This surcingle’s neutral grip makes forward swings easier.

**Great for freestyle-** The surcingle’s low center of gravity makes it sturdy even in the most challenging of freestyle moves.

**Power girth-** Newer models feature a power girth.

**Sliding side reins-** Newer models feature sliding side reins.

### Cons:

**Handles tip back on some horses-** This surcingle tends to tip back slightly on some horses, especially those with tall withers. This makes handstands on the handles (especially swings to handstand) somewhat challenging.

**Design slightly less sturdy than LV and LD models-** Because this is an older design, it is less sturdy than the LV and LD designs.

**Hard handles-** The handles are very lightly padded, making stands in the handles painful. Shin guards recommended, especially on older models!

### Things to Think About:

**Easy to find used-** Many of the top clubs are switching out their old Kristensen L surcingles for Lensing S or Kristensen LD surcigles. Newer clubs might be able to find a good deal on used Kristensen L surcigles in the interim!



Photo courtesy of Lynne Overy/VaultingPhotos.com

## KRISTENSEN LV SURCINGLE

PRICE RANGE: \$1850 and up

Made by Meineke



**A** mix between the classic Kristensen L surcingle and the new Kristensen LD, the Kristensen LV surcingle sits low on the horse, ensuring stability even under the power of a moving vaulter. The LV grips allow a variety of hand and foot positions, and the surcingle’s versatility makes it great for vaulters of all levels.

### Pros:

**Excellent horse fit-** Featuring adjustable padding and a flexible tree, this surcingle fits nearly every shape and size.

**Power girth-** The crank girth system maximizes leverage to make girth tightening easier for humans and easier on horses, minimizing uncomfortable yanking and pulling.

**Sliding side rein system-** Side reins easily slide up and down on a track, making it easy to make quick adjustments.

**Great for swings and flight exercises-** In addition to allowing a neutral grip, the handles on the Kristensen LV surcingle sit flat when fitted properly, making handstands easier to hold.

### Cons:

**Challenging for reverse exercises in the handles-** The shape of these handles is somewhat limiting for reverse exercises in the handles, like reverse stands.

**Break-in time-** Some models of this surcingle sport a peak between the grips, allowing extra room for the horse’s withers. While this is a great feature, it can be uncomfortable until it is fully broken in.

**Less versatile than the LD-** While a great surcingle, the handle shape of the Kristensen LV makes it less versatile than the LD.

### Things to Think About:

**Not all surcigles are created equally-** Because Meineke hand-makes these surcigles, not every surcingle is the exact same. While all Kristensen LD surcigles have a similar shape, some may have slightly taller/wider/shorter/narrower handles than another.

**Choose your features wisely-** Adjustable padding, sliding side reins, wither peak, power girth, and color are all optional. Make sure the surcingle you buy has all the features you want.



Photo courtesy of Alex Thomas

**Stretching and custom-fitting required-** Meineke ships its surcigles in a narrow box, so when you receive a new surcingle, it will look much too narrow to fit on a horse. On a towel or other soft surface, simply place the surcingle handles down and stretch it wider until it fits your horse’s shape.



## LENSING WORLD CHAMPION SURCINGLE (C.L. KÜR I)

Made by Reitsport Peter Sattlerei, Voltigier Gurt

PRICE RANGE: \$1850 and up



Photo courtesy of Kate Reisel/VaultingPhotos.com

'04 & '06), Joanne Eccles (Great Britain, '10 & '12), and Patrick Looser (Switzerland, '10), this surcingle is a great option for athletes looking to take their vaulting to the next level.

### Pros:

**Excellent for compulsories-** A favorite for mounts and swings, the wide base allows ample room to balance the perfect handstand, especially for larger, taller vaulters.

**Great for freestyle-** Featuring both large, rounded handles and an L-shaped neutral grip, the opportunities are nearly endless!

**Great for larger vaulters-** With large handles and sturdy manufacturing, this surcingle is designed with larger, stronger vaulters in mind.

**Outstanding craftsmanship-** The World Champion surcingle is built to last, rarely peeling, scuffing, or otherwise deteriorating with proper care.

### Cons:

**Wide center of gravity-** The handles on this surcingle sit high and wide, which, while great for compulsories, can present challenges in freestyle. Due to this wide center of gravity, one-legged stands in the handle are especially challenging and can create surcingle slippage on some horse body types.

**Designed to be used on one horse, not several-** The flipside of this surcingle's fine craftsmanship is that this surcingle is designed with one horse in mind. Switching this surcingle between horses of different shapes and sizes is not recommended.

**Challenging for underhand mounts-** Because of the dual handle design, this surcingle can be quite challenging for shorter vaulters who are not yet able to perform overhand mounts (mounting with the center of gravity over the top of the surcingle, rather than below it).

**No power girth-** This surcingle does not come with a crank girth system, though you can purchase one from Kristensen Vaulting Supply and have it installed aftermarket. Luckily, the billet straps on this surcingle are long and supple, making girth tightening easier.

**No sliding side reins-** This surcingle does not come with the Kristensen sliding side rein system.

### Things to Think About:

**Horse fit-** Make sure to check the fit before purchasing. While this surcingle fits some horses well, it doesn't fit all.

Created by world champions for world champions, this surcingle is the best of both worlds. Featuring large, round handles in addition to an L-shaped neutral grip, it provides a sturdy base for compulsories and myriad options for freestyle. Used by big-name World Champions like Nicola Ströh (Germany, '04 & '08), Kai Vorberg (Germany,



## KRISTENSEN LD SURCINGLE

Made by Meineke

PRICE RANGE: \$1850 and up

The latest surcingle designed by four-time world medalist and renowned lunger Lasse Kristensen, the Kristensen LD is easily one of the best surcingles on the market. Designed with the elite equine in mind, the LD features adjustable Velcro padding on a sturdy, yet flexible tree. Simply by moving the pads up or down and by flexing the tree to a wider or narrower setting, the LD fits comfortably on just about any horse. The surcingle's sliding side rein system and power girth makes quick side rein adjustments and girth tightening easy and painless. Sturdy even in the most complicated of down and ups and one-legged stands, the Kristensen LD surcingle is a great all-around surcingle for vaulters of all levels and horses of almost all sizes.

### Pros:

**Excellent horse fit-** Featuring adjustable padding and a flexible tree, this surcingle fits nearly every shape and size.

**Power girth-** The crank girth system maximizes leverage to make girth tightening easier for humans and easier on horses, minimizing uncomfortable yanking and pulling.

**Sliding side rein system-** Side reins easily slide up and down on a track, making it easy to make quick adjustments.

**Great for swings and flight exercises-** In addition to allowing a neutral grip, the handles on the Kristensen LD surcingle sit flat when fitted properly, making handstands easier to hold.

**Great for freestyle-** With deep handles as well as both neutral and forward grips, almost anything is possible with this surcingle.

**Great for team freestyle-** Sturdy, easy-to-stand-in handles, unobtrusive for neck basing, and great for multiple grips, this surcingle is used by top teams around the world.

**All-arounder-** This surcingle is great for all levels of vaulters performing compulsories, freestyle, technical test, and team freestyle.

### Cons:

**Break-in time-** Some models of this surcingle sport a peak between the grips, allowing extra room for the horse's withers. While this is a great feature, it can be uncomfortable until it is fully broken in.

# LENSING S SURCINGLE (C.L. KÜR II)

PRICE RANGE: \$1975 and up

Made by Reitsport Peter Sattlerei, Voltigier Gurt

Developed in cooperation with three-time world and European champion Christoph Lensing, the Lensing S surcingle is extremely popular among canter vaulters, especially on the elite vaulting circuit. The gently curving handle shape allows vaulters to use both forward and neutral grips throughout their compulsories, and the deep, Y-shaped handle bottom makes complicated freestyle moves, like stands and handstands in the handles, significantly easier. Used by world champions and beginners alike, many vaulters of all levels prefer this surcingle.

## Pros:

**Excellent for freestyle-** With a gentle S-shape on top, and a deep Y-shape on the bottom, this surcingle provides optimum grip positions and foot holds for complicated freestyle moves.

**Great for high-level mounts-** With a flat middle between the two grips, this surcingle has a perfect platform for the right hand in upper level mounts.

**Great for forward swings and flight exercises-** In addition to allowing a neutral grip, the handles on the Lensing S surcingle sit flat when fitted properly, making handstands easier to hold.

**Great for team vaulting-** This surcingle is great for standing in the handles, neck basing,

offers multiple grip options, and is used by top teams around the world.

**Handle change system-** Some models come equipped with a handle-change system, allowing vaulters to switch out the handles without changing the base.

## Cons:

**Designed to be used on one horse, not several-** This surcingle is designed with one horse in mind. Even though it features adjustable Velcro padding, the shape of the pads is not ideal for all horses. Switching this surcingle between horses of different shapes and sizes is not recommended.

**Higher center of gravity-** The Lensing S surcingle sits high on the horse. While this is helpful for many moves, it creates a slightly less sturdy surcingle that can cause soreness and may slip if not tight enough.

**Challenging for reverse swings-** Because the handles are quite high, reverse swings are challenging at first. With practice, this becomes a non-issue.

**Hard handles-** The handles are very lightly padded, making stands in the handles painful. Shin guards recommended!

**No power girth-** This surcingle does not come with a crank girth system, though you can



Photo courtesy of Kate Revelt/VaultingPhotos.com

purchase one from Kristensen Vaulting Supply and have it installed aftermarket. Luckily, the billet straps on this surcingle are long and supple, making girth tightening easier.

**No sliding side reins-** This surcingle does not come with the Kristensen sliding side rein system.

## Things to Think About:

**Horse fit-** Make sure to check the fit before purchasing. While this surcingle fits some horses well, it doesn't fit all.

**Challenging for handstand in the handles-** Many vaulters find handstand in the handles challenging or impossible in these handles, mainly because of their shape.

## Things to Think About:

**Not all surcingles are created equally-** Because Meineke hand-makes these surcingles, not every surcingle is the exact same. While all Kristensen LD surcingles have a similar shape, some may have slightly taller/wider/shorter/narrower handles than another.

**Choose your features wisely-** Adjustable padding, sliding side reins, wither peak, power girth, and color are all optional. Make sure the surcingle you buy has all the features you want.

**Stretching and custom-fitting required-** Meineke ships its surcingles in a narrow box, so when you receive a new surcingle, it will look much too narrow to fit on a horse. On a towel or other soft surface, simply place the surcingle handles down and stretch it wider until it fits your horse's shape.

**\*Surcingle price ranges include cost of surcingle only, not including accessories such as side reins, girths, or any personalization. Prices may vary with currency exchange rates and choice of distributor.**



Photo courtesy of Kate Revelt/VaultingPhotos.com