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WHEN WRITING TO ADVERTISERS PLEASE MENTION THE GUIDE

How to Shoe Draft Horses

Suggestions by a Shoer of 30 Years' Experience

Illustrations from "The Horse Book."

The old adage, "no foot, no horse," grows more significant with the passing of the years. If these four words were more generally understood, it would mean thousands of dollars to the horse industry.

The perfect foot is not often seen. It is wide at the heel and of medium depth. The depth at the heel should be about one-half the length down the toe when the foot is in normal shape. The coronet should be round on the front feet and as nearly that shape as possible behind. A big, round foot indicates that the sensitive tissues covered by the hoof wall are healthy. The contracted foot, narrow at the heel, always means just the opposite. A full frog is a great asset to a big horse. It is the cushion which takes off the jars. Horses with extremely low heels are likely to go prematurely lame because of a lack of frog. The inner part of the foot is not well enough protected from the wear and tear to which a draft horse foot is subjected to remain free from soreness long. However, there is less trouble with a thin-heeled horse going lame than a high-heeled one. Boxy feet, high at the heels, are sure to result in lameness sooner or later. They cause a horse to stand up on his pasterns too much and they always contract and sometimes pretty quickly. High heels and poor frogs always go together, for with such a shaped foot the weight of the horse comes on the hoof wall instead of on the frog. A frog is much like muscle tissue in that it never develops well without constant use. If one wants to grow a good frog, he has to take off the heel and let the frog down to the ground. Then the foot will widen out and grow a good, springy frog. The slope of the hoof in front should be about 45 degrees, the same as the set of the pastern. If kept at more than that angle, a horse cannot set down properly on his pasterns. To give a horse a good elastic step his pasterns must set at such an angle that they will move up and down freely. There must not be a stilted step which comes with short, stubby pasterns and upright hoof walls.

How to Avoid Foot Troubles

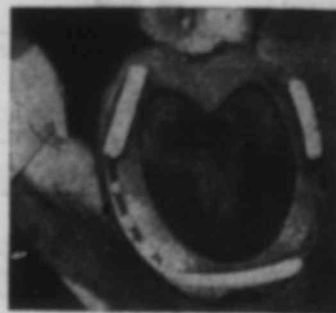
The majority of all foot troubles are due to negligence. Few horses have bad feet from inheritance. Thirty minutes a week will keep the average farm horse's feet in perfect order. What farmer is there who does anything to his horses' feet unless they become so long that his horse can't walk easily,

paddock, he should be walked out of doors and especially when the ground is wet. Riding a stallion through meadows or pastures when heavy dew is on is excellent for the hoofs.

Always keep the foot as nearly level as possible. This rule applies to horses of all ages, and particularly to the young, growing colt. Sidebones are frequently caused by allowing one side of the hoof to wear off short. Then the weight is shifted to the short side, which almost invariably sets up inflammation, causing a sidebone sooner or later. Use a rasp and pinchers to trim a horse's feet, but not a chisel. One cannot use the latter and be certain that he is trimming the foot level.

Growing a Hoof Prior to Shoeing

Use the rasp sparingly on the hoof walls of a show horse, for if one wears away the glossy appearance, the hoof



A Bar Shoe

texture soon becomes dry and brittle and the feet go to pieces. There is no danger, however, from rasping the feet of the ordinary farm horse, if it is done only when he is shod, for usually he is not shod more than twice a year. Better keep very light plates on the show horse all the time to protect the hoof wall and allow it to grow. I always take a very light plate shoe and hammer it out until it is extremely thin at the heel. Then when one gets ready to shoe for show, he has a foot to work on. Too many people think that if they get a good horse shoer a few days before starting out to the fairs that he can fix up the feet. That oftentimes proves a sad mistake. In many cases it takes months of careful work to get feet in proper shape, and sometimes a year. Nobody can shoe a draft horse perfectly unless there is plenty of toe, and if not, it takes time to grow it. A heel that is too high cannot be cut down as it should be all at once. The work must be gradual or else soreness will result. It usually takes two or three trimmings to correct a high heel. If the quarter is lacking, keep the toe short, and that will throw more wear on the toe, less on the heel, and consequently the quarters will have a better chance to grow. Of course, if a foot is naturally well-shaped and properly set, it doesn't take much of an effort to keep it that way. Always allow the frog to grow as long as it will. A great many people think that a horse isn't neatly shod unless the frog, bar and sole are pared away closely. No worse mistake was ever made, and any horse shoer who will do that to please his customer is doing nothing sort of cruelty to animals. Never under any circumstances cut away the bar or sole unless it is diseased. Then it is necessary in order to treat the affected tissue with medicine and cure it. Nature has provided the frog, bar and sole to protect the inner and very tender parts of the foot.

The Colt's Feet

The colt should have his feet carefully watched, always keeping them trimmed level. There is very little that can be done to readjust the set of feet and pasterns on a mature horse, but the young colt is easily susceptible to such changes. The set of feet and pasterns can be thrown one way or the other if it is done while the bones and joints are still young and flexible. If the colt stands too close behind or in front, keep the inside toe of the hoof a



A Toe That Is Too Long

or unless they break off badly and cause lameness. Many good pure breeds are permanently ruined by letting their feet grow without attention. The foot is like a sponge, very porous and sensitive to water. It will not stay in perfect order without moisture. Keep a horse in a stall and his feet will dry up and contract. Never put oil on the feet, as that prevents water from entering the hoof wall. Pack damp clay in the bottom of the foot to hold moisture. If I can get it, I prefer white rock clay. This can be secured at most drug stores. Get the horse in the mud occasionally, so as to soften up his feet. Where it is impossible to get a stallion out into a

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for Lump Jaw

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