

Keeping an Old Hunter Happy

Doug Workman, CJF

WE ALL HAVE THESE HORSES ON OUR BOOKS. THEY ARE HEADING DOWN THE BACK SIDE OF THE HILL IN THEIR WORKING LIFE AND THEY NEED A LITTLE HELP FROM THE FARRIER. NOW I'M NOT TALKING ABOUT CRIPPLED OR LAME HORSES PER SAY, JUST HORSES WITH MINOR PROBLEMS THAT ARE ACQUIRED FROM A LONG ACTIVE LIFE.

This particular horse we will call Sugar Lump is just such a horse. Sugar Lump is a Hunter and lives the typical hunter life of bath in the morning, training, bath again, 3 to 4 days a week and shows on the weekends with more baths. I don't really understand all the bathing but it's hard on the feet. Aside from the feet being wet all the time things tend to get a little loose and run forward with age.

The first thing I look for when shoeing every horse is a lesson I learned from Mr. Edward Martin at the second clinic I ever attended when he came to this country. In his opinion the "only two hard and fast rules that apply to a horse's feet are

Straight Hoof Wall (no flare's) and Symmetry," with almost everything else there is some grey area. Looking at the picture with the shoe pulled before the feet are trimmed, the heels are a bit under run and the toe is worn away. From the bottom you can see the heels forward and the toe missing, but you can also see the distortion in the quarters. It is my opinion that the toe was not being supported enough, creating the asymmetrical foot and distortion of the wall in the quarters. I believe this was caused by setting the shoe back and not supporting the toe. I'm not saying I don't care about break over. I just don't like to unload the toe to achieve it.

My goal with the trim is to bring the heels back as close to the highest and widest part of the frog as I can and to be as kind as possible to the toe or lack thereof. I will make the wall approximately the same thickness (excluding the missing toe) from heel to heel. You should only take off what you must to re-establish straight horn and symmetry. Healthy sole, frog, and



Before trim.



Left front- note thin wall at toe and lack of symmetry.

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hoof wall do more to support the horse than anything you can do with a shoe. Since we are shoeing a Hunter we have to use aluminum on the front- it must be a law. I will be using the new Kerckhaert Aluminum Comfort shoe. The Comfort has enough mass to support a large horse. The nail holes are well positioned in all sizes, enabling good solid nailing. The toe has a good radius with no corners and the roll goes from quarter to quarter.

I want to fit the front half of the foot as if the toe wall were there, no more no less. I want to fit the back half of the foot with enough expansion and length so at the end of the shoeing cycle the foot will be on top of the shoe and not over it. By taking the time to make the hoof wall the same thickness and straight in the trim, all the nails will start in the white line. This will not only make for easier nailing, it will keep the wall from splitting as badly under wet conditions. With the rolled leading edge of the shoe from quarter to quarter not only can you ease break over but there are no corners so the advantage is equal diagonally as well as straight. Looking at the shoe on the foot you can see that the roll of the leading edge allows the foot to break faster while still supporting the toe.

One of the best ways to tell if you are on the right path with any horse you shoe is to pick your work apart 5 or 6 weeks later when you come back. It's easy making one look good on day one, but if it still maintains your overall plan only a little longer at the end of the cycle you can't be far off. ■



Above: Right front – Significant distortion, medial toe.



Above: Working toward symmetry and uniform wall thickness.



Left: Aluminum Comfort design with good toe and heel support plus rolled toe and toe quarters.



Above and Left: Finished job, note breakover aspect even with shoe fit to toe.

Below: Bottom of finished job illustrates good heel support and breakover point.



TOOL MAINTENANCE

Cutting the Groove in a Sharpening Wheel

Deburring or buffing/sharpening wheels that are on the market do not come with a groove for the hoof knife hook. Cutting a groove into the wheel is a simple process that is outlined here. This is a farrierproducts™ brand 3/4" x 6" Buffing/Sharpening wheel mounted on a 1/4 hp Baldor Buffer.

Caution: Always wear a face shield with adequate eye protection and gloves to protect your hands.

1. You need a sharpened tool such as the tang of a rasp to cut the groove. Since the wheels are abrasive, you may need to sharpen the tang more than once in the process.
2. Set up a block to brace your tool. It should be sufficient to allow you to be even with the center of the shaft of the unit.
3. You can mark the wheel where your hook will fall before beginning the cut.
4. Once marked, start the grinder and apply steady pressure with the tool until you have cut the groove to the depth and width you desire. This is best attained by simply putting slow steady pressure into the wheel, not moving the tool from side to side or up and down at all.

You can also see a video clip of this procedure if you visit farrierproducts.com/farriery/video.html ■



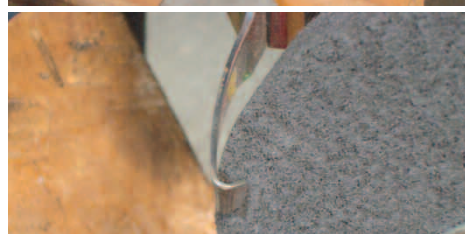
1.

SHARPENED TANG OF RASP WILL CUT GROOVE.



2.

BLOCK SHOULD HOLD TOOL AT LEVEL OF CENTER OF SHAFT.



3.

YOU CAN LIGHTLY MARK GROOVE AREA WITH KNIFE HOOK.

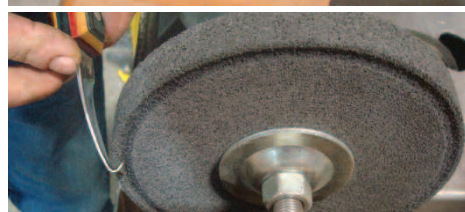


4.

POSITION TANG AT AREA TO BE GROOVED BEFORE STARTING BUFFER.



START BUFFER AND APPLY STEADY PRESSURE INTO WHEEL.



CHECK DEPTH OF CUT TO SEE IF IT IS SUFFICIENT FOR HOOK.



NO COMPROMISE HERE



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Vector Horseshoe Nails

Vector Nails are made using the rolled process – creating a finished product with high tensile strength.



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Designed by Kerckhaert to meet the demand for a high quality forged nail.

Equi-Pak Soft

Application & Uses

With the introduction of Equi-Pak Soft from Vettec, farriers now have another option in their toolbox when working on horses that require softer support due to foot conformation or suspect sole depth.

Like traditional Equi-Pak, Equi-Pak Soft sets in 30 seconds and bonds to a clean, dry sole. Unlike traditional Equi-Pak, Equi-Pak Soft stays very soft throughout the shoeing cycle thereby requiring a pad with the shoe for a horse in work. The material is so soft that without a pad the material will grab the ground and eventually “chunk” out. For therapeutic cases where the activity level is minimal, you can fill Equi-Pak Soft to ground level providing medium support.

Equi-Pak Soft is perfect for hard working horses that become heel sore and need a pad, big footed horses with deep commissures, and lameness cases where depth of sole requires a softer material, especially at

the toe. The big advantage of Equi-Pak Soft compared to the silicone putty application technique is that it bonds to the sole thereby sealing out sand, moisture, manure etc.

Sore footed: pad it up and fill with Soft.

Deep footed, no pad: fill commissures with Soft and fill the rest with regular Equi-Pak or with Equi-Pak CS.

Rotational concerns: fill toe region with the Soft and fill caudal region with Equi-Pak or the CS.

Hint: As we come out of the winter months and into the wet spring weather you'll notice that your horse's feet become soft and more pliable. On those large, deep-footed horses, a full fill with regular Pak might cause some irritation over time. This is the perfect time to apply the soft in the commissures and fill the rest with the regular. This also holds true if using a wedge shoe. ■



PAD APPLIED, FILL SOLE WITH EQUI-PAK SOFT.



SET TIME IS APPROXIMATELY 30 SECONDS.



FOR THERAPEUTIC CASES NOT UNDER HEAVY WORK, PRODUCT MAY HOLD WITHOUT PAD.

New Products

Aluminum Comfort

An addition to the Comfort series that offers a lighter weight option. Key design features include - rolled toes and branches, better breakover improves coordination of movement, optimizes balance, less pressure on the tendons. Adequate thickness to provide strength and durability. Built-in sole relief. Shoes are symmetrical. Sizes 0-3, front only.

FootPro™ 1-3/4 & 2 lb. Rounding Hammers

The detailing of these new fully polished hammers by highly skilled craftsmen is a trademark of the FootPro™ line. Made in the USA. Replacement handles are also available.



Farrier Education Videos

Two new educational videos, **“Sharpening Wheel Groove for Farrier Knife”** and **“Hammer Handle Replacement Process”** have been uploaded to our web site. These clips are for information only and not available for purchase.

Visit farrierproducts.com/farriery/video.html or subscribe to our YouTube channel at youtube.com/user/farrierproducts to view these and other videos from FPD.

If you have suggestions for how-to topics that you would like us to post, please call FPD toll free at 1-800-468-2879.

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