

Using Your Hoof Meter Reader (HMR)

Simplified Instructions for Horse Owners

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1. First, put the hoof on a flat surface such as a concrete slab (I'm using a thick plastic cutting board here).
2. To measure "Toe Length", set the yellow dial (this is a left front hoof – use the red dial for right hooves) flat on the supporting surface, and set the white dial ("Toe Ruler") against the center of the toe wall.
3. Chances are good (in fact, most of the time) the coronary band or hairline will prevent the Toe Ruler from being set flush against the wall. In this case, set the white dial away from, but parallel to (*yellow dashed lines*), the toe wall as I've done here.
4. "Toe Length" is gauged about ¼ inch (1 cm) below the coronary band. From this point on the hoof wall, Toe Length is read straight across on the Toe Ruler (*blue arrow*).
5. So, Toe Length for this hoof is approximately 2¾ inches (7.0 cm), or "Natural - Less Common".

So, from the standpoint of natural toe length, this hoof is in good shape. Now, let's go check the toe angle!



1. Next, place the angle dial flush against the center of the toe wall. The yellow dial is for left hooves, the red dial for right hooves.
2. The white dial should rest flat against the supporting surface.
3. The "Angle Reader" is on the white dial.
4. This hoof has an approximate toe angle of 51 degrees, that is, "Natural - Most Common".

Good news! Like toe length, toe angle for this hoof is also very natural. The odds are that if your horse's hooves also fall into the natural ranges, you and your hoof care provider are doing right by your horse. Keep up the good work! *But if this isn't the case, please read below.*

Chances are that your HMR dials won't lay flush against the toe wall because the wall doesn't grow straight down like the naturally shaped hoof above. Or maybe your measurements fall into the "unnatural" ranges given on the HMR. This means the hooves may be ready for trimming, or are not being trimmed correctly according to natural hoof care standards, or there is deformity due to pathology — or all three! Whichever, it's time to take action! Return to my website (www.jaimejackson.com) for a consultation or contact a trimmer listed on the AANHCP website (www.AANHCP.net) to get to the bottom of the problem. Your horse is counting on you! — J. Jackson