

seedy toe

a quick and dirty introduction to
seedy toe, blue balls, and some
other hoof care basics you need
to know

Because no-one likes a smelly crack



THE **HOOFCO**

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Healthy Hooves Go the Distance

Recognising common hoof pathology

To the untrained eye, hoof pathology can be hard to recognise. To the trained eye, it's present in around 90% of horses.

We aren't just talking about whether the hooves look nice and trimmed up from above, we are talking about the frog health, wall health, blood flow, heel first landings, flat foot landing or toe first landing which can all lead to major hoof health decline – sometimes rapidly.

Is the wall smooth? Does it display “rings”, is it dry/hydrated and is it level? What do the angles of the hoof look like? What about the coronet band – are there dips or raised areas?

All these small deviations can give us an idea of what state of health the hoof health is in and what may be happening with the internal structures as a Hoof Care pro with a trained eye before even picking up the hoof to assess.

Some pathology is blatantly obvious of course but we need to be familiar with our own horses' hooves to know what is normal or in decline. Pros can spot it before even picking up your horses' hooves.



This takes years of being a Hoof Nerd, sniffing way too much Hoof Funk (that you can't wash from your nostrils for days), blood, sweat and tears – but still we do it because your horses hoof health matters to us – so we need to know it damn well matters to you too.

Your farrier will certainly appreciate your efforts.

It also means your hoof care pro, working in conjunction with yourself, needs to take an interest in Building Healthier Hooves – after all that is the very foundation of a strong, sound horse.

“Hoofmanship” should be part of your daily “horsemanship” routine. Just as we check our horses over daily as we feed out their ration, brush and generally fluff about looking after them, we should also be following a strict hoof health routine which at the very least means picking their feet clean daily.



Julie Wright – Founder THE HOOF CO – Shahzada Endurance Ride

Building Healthier Hooves

Hooves do not magically get healthy and pathogen free and stay that way, unfortunately.

As a Hoof Care pro I've often wished for this as it certainly would have saved my back over the years.



Hooves grow approx. 1cm per month, even more if the horse is in full work.

For example, my endurance horses when working in 80km rides and training were growing a new hoof capsule every 5 months – that's a lot of rapid change if not maintained.

Weather changes, pasture and feed change, environment changes, workload changes – all affect hooves. If we aren't paying attention for a week or so, we could find ourselves needing to sort out some Hoof Funk of our own.

So, what are we looking for when start out on our quest to “Build Healthier Hooves”?

Let's start with addressing a very common issue we see as Hoof Care Professionals – Seedy Toe/White Line Disease.

Seedy Toe

White Line Disease

An opportunistic bacterium and thankfully only the really advanced cases of the “black mouldy cheese” variety give off that incredibly funky smell. BUT it invades and travels quickly and is not something owners are always aware of or are able to resect.



Fig. 1



Fig. 2

This needs the help of a professional to open up via resection (we cut back the hoof wall usually in an inverted U shape and clear out the active infection) and then provide a treatment plan to help stop the further invasion.

Once again, as a professional, we will usually be able to spot this before we pick up the hoof.

For the more advancing cases, this will usually present as a crack around 10-2 at the toe.

Fig. 1 is a classic example of long-term neglect of Seedy Toe invasion.

Fig. 2 shows the hoof trimmed up, resected and plugged with some of our earliest versions of Beeswax Blue Balls® several years ago.

Addressing Seedy Toe

Hoof in hand assessing hoof prior to trimming – note the deviation in the hoof wall at the toe. This presented as a crack on the dorsal wall of the hoof when the hoof was on the ground. (Fig. 3)

Hoof trimmed back, note the black line which runs through the hoof wall at the toe back into the white line. (Fig. 4)

Starting the resection – moist black infection present. (Fig. 5) Then resecting out the active infection until there is no more black line present. (Fig. 6)

Our go to for Seedy Toe infections are our Beeswax Blue Balls[®]. They aid in keeping the area free of debris whilst the ingredients get to work on the pathogens.

Ball in place. (Fig. 7)

Beeswax Blue Ball pressed firmly into place. (Fig. 8)



The unique combination of ingredients in Beeswax Blue Balls[®] ensures that this type of application will stay put longer – saving you the headaches of applying messy home mixed lotions twice daily for less-than-optimal results.

Seedy Toe continued ...

If left unchecked, Seedy Toe can travel up through the laminae at 1cm per month and eventually cause an infection that results in an abscess blowout at the coronet band.

Left untreated, abscess bursting, extreme lameness. (Fig. 9)

After abscess burst and cleaned up. Swelling of the lower leg now reduced. (Fig. 10)

Management needs to be put in place to keep clean.

An abscess from unchecked Seedy Toe invasion is extremely painful for the horse and totally avoidable by resection by an experienced trimmer.



THE HOOF CO



Great hoofmanship is great horsemanship!

If you take away ANYTHING from this quick & dirty introduction to what can go VERY WRONG with your horse's hoof health, let it be

great hoof health comes down to great hoof maintenance and early intervention.

- MAINTENANCE – take ownership of your horses' hooves, diet and environment.
- PREVENTION – use simple, effective products to ensure cleansing and prevention of issues flaring into major problems.
- EARLY INTERVENTION – always be on top of any small hoof infection before it creates lameness.
- COMMUNICATION – with your Hoof Care provider. Ask questions, take an interest in hoof health and follow any recommendations they have to share with you.
- EDUCATION – take the opportunity to educate yourself from professionals who take an interest in helping you help your horse. Discard internet advice from non-professionals who have probably never trimmed a hoof let alone dealt with major hoof problems successfully.

MACARTHUR PEOPLE

Soothing way with horseflesh



Photo: MICHAEL PUGH

The journalist to the Wright about horses and what pleasure horses should be riding partners. "You have played a really important part in making the horse world like a family," said Wright of working as a volunteer horse rider. "It has to be something that is not property," she said.

A Hoof Nerd in the Making!

Julie Wright - Dip.Ept, Cert.Emt - Founder THE HOOF CO



More than just a great set of balls!

Julie Wright

Founder - THE HOOF CO
(Formerly Bare Equine Australia)
Diploma of Equine Podiotherapy
Certified Equine Myofunctional Therapist

How did I get here ... blue balls, pink bits, and smelly cracks seem a LONG way from the list of professional certifications I've earned.

And as much fun as I have with my social sites, believe me when I say I take "hoofmanship" and hoof care very seriously.

I have spent the best part of the last 2 decades under horses, initially working as an Equine Myofunctional Therapist (massage), realising how many damaged hooves there were on the horses I was working on. I was nothing but a band-aid and could give them a good rub – but their posture and upper body issues were due to their hooves. Thankfully my brilliant lecturer was a hoof nerd too so I turned to her for advice and support. So off "down under" I went looking to learn more.

I never really wanted to be a Hoof Care Pro, I just wanted healthier hooves for my own horses and to work out if I could assist owners more in my Equine Massage business. Too late – I was hooked and off Endurance riding on my barefoot horses and getting asked lots of questions about hooves along the way.

I attended every hoof clinic I could from local and overseas lecturers. Asked questions, mulled over new insights, and inspected every hoof I could. Then it started – "will you trim mine?" led to LOTS of hooves to trim, fewer horses being massaged as my passions changed focus due to my increased knowledge.

Hoof Boots took off with some great new designs being released around 2005/6 in Australia. This saw me outfitting Hoof Boots as well as being Australia's first mobile Hoof Boot fitter with the Easycare, Inc. range.

The Diploma of Equine Podiotherapy was introduced to Australia in the late 2000's. I attended in 2010 and completed the following year after presenting my case studies for evaluation.

I always had a keen interest in topical hoof treatments. There just weren't any easily accessible for my clients. I have really kept them in mind when formulating our range. Products need to be easy to use, not messy and most of all, stay put and be effective to reduce their time needed to be re-applying.

It's so rewarding to be able to help customers assess hooves and know our products are not only safe & gentle to sensitive structures, but extremely effective too. I wish I had our full line to carry with me years ago to provide my clients with an easy on the spot solution to their hoof problems.

You can find our solutions to common problems here: www.thehoofco.com.au

