

# *thrush* *what's the rush?*

a quick introduction to "smelly cracks" how to pack them and some other hoof care basics you need to know.

*Because no-one likes a smelly crack*



**THE** **HOOF** **CO**

# 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, pastures 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 – Thrush – aka “Smelly Cracks”

# Smelly Cracks

## *Thrush*

If you've ever been in close proximity to a horse with even a minor Thrush infection, you will never forget the smell

As a hoof care professional, this lingers.... really I mean its the Eau de Parfum that we carry around with us on the daily.



I've had clients stick the hoof pick under my nose exclaiming "my horse has thrush – look smell"... which leaves me recoiling because I know I'm about to get a significant nose full of that when I'm under their horse.

## **We aptly name them "SMELLY CRACKS!"**

The hoof in Fig.1 is nice enough looking and freshly trimmed – but let's check out what the real hoof health is by going "down under."



# Smelly Cracks continued

This hoof is pre-trim.

Tight Smelly cracks on this one. (Fig. 2) The black areas on each side of the frog (collateral grooves) are Thrush. As the centre of the frog (central sulcus) is contracted and deep, this will be suffering Thrush too. There is further pathology here but for now we will concentrate on those smelly cracks.



Fig. 2



Fig. 3

In urgent need of a Hoof Care professional – but neglected prior to our arrival.

This hoof would have benefitted not only from Professional trimming but daily maintenance of the thrush prior to our visit. Note the “smelly cracks”, contracted central sulcus, collateral grooves full of debris and turning black. (Fig. 3)

Sole underrun with Thrush along with Thrush infection in the white line which can lead to white line disease if left unchecked.

This hoof is also chronically (long term) laminitic as you can see from the long toe and stretched laminar.

# More Smelly Cracks....

Another Chronic laminitic (Cushings Horse) which has not been attended to with owner maintenance. This was our first visit to this horse, taking over from another farrier.

We banded on about owner maintenance and what can be done to help this hoof in between professional visits.

A foundered horse needs a good heel support. Do you think this guy would be happy to load his weight onto those “smelly cracks”? (Fig. 4)

Fig. 5 was taken within a month and we had great improvement in the heel (still tight smelly cracks – but the whole hoof shape is changing rapidly). The owners are so invested in helping this horse, they learned to do maintenance trims.

Fig. 6 was taken 5 months from initial visit. Owners had taken full control over trimming and maintenance, calling me in to check on progress and help educate their eye to trim details every 4 weeks.

Whilst this hoof is still in trouble from chronic laminitis associated with Cushings disease, I think we can agree on the improvement in the back half of the hoof being a more robust platform for comfort for this lovely mare.



Fig. 4



Fig. 5



Fig. 6



# Getting your Crack sorted



Smelly black thrush in collateral grooves., needing a thorough cleanse and Thrush application. (Fig. 7) We have several products targeted at Thrush – our most popular our Award Winning Thrush Care Package consisting of Hoof Spray, Hoof Powder and Hoof Pack for getting your crack sorted.

Pictured is our Hoof Pack (hoof clay for Thrush) applied after blasting those smelly cracks with our Hoof Spray (Fig. 8). Ideally, we need a good robust frog with minimal crevices for debris to get trapped in creating a breeding ground for pathogens.

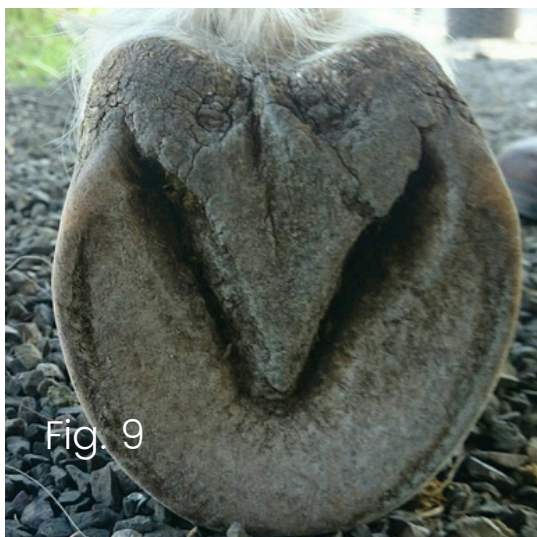


Fig. 9 is an example of a healthier back of foot. Still needing daily maintenance but a well- developed frog with minimal moist smelly cracks.



# 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: ROBERT PACEY

Ms Wright  
about horses she also states  
horses should be treated properly  
"she has done a really good job  
of relating to the lady, much  
like a trainer" and treated  
her as a professional who  
"it has to be completely safe for  
the 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-applicating.

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](http://www.thehoofco.com.au)

