

# The Natural Angle

VOLUME 11: ISSUE 2

## GROUP THERAPY, FARRIER STYLE

By Dan Burke

A recent clinic sponsored by FPD turned into a group effort to treat a 5 year old mare that had been experiencing a variety of lameness problems for several months. Dave Farley, working with Vanessa Churchill, DVM and members of the Nova Scotia Farriers Association tackled the problem with results that seemed to confirm there is strength in numbers.

### Dr. Churchill's Notes:

The horse became lame in June 2007. She was 3+5 lame on the left front foot and short strided bilaterally. Hoof testers showed sensitivity over the caudal heel region and over the frog on both front feet. A palmar digital nerve block was performed on the left front and the horse became lame 3/5 on the right front foot. After a palmar digital nerve block she was clinically sound without a rider. Radiographs were performed and revealed minor changes in the navicular bone. The horse was placed on a course of phenylbutazone and pentoxifylline and the owner was instructed to have the horse shod immediately to give her heel support. The farrier trimmed the horse and applied natural balance shoes to the front feet. After 2 weeks the client saw no improvement and stated the bute therapy did not seem to be working. I became involved when the client called for a recheck. Prior to examining Belle I evaluated the

radiographs and told the client that Belle had very thin soles (less than 1cm on either foot prior to the trimming). I recommended sole support using a pour-in pad. Because the farrier had no pour-in pads, wedge pads were placed on both front feet instead. Two days later Belle was extremely lame and the owner called. When told of the change in pad type, I had the farrier immediately remove the pads. The shoes were replaced.

Approximately three days later the horse was acutely non weight-bearing lame in the left front foot. Upon examination an abscess was discovered at the second nail hole. The shoes were pulled and the foot soaked and packed to facilitate drainage.

After repeated acute lameness due to abscesses, developing white line disease, and a deep stone bruise, I performed repeat radiographs 8 weeks post trimming. They revealed 4mm sole depth on the left fore and 5mm on the right fore foot. There was adequate wall growth; however, with no sole depth and the other issues we were dealing with, she was left bare foot in a deeply bedded stall to allow her feet to heal while we ordered Old Mac boots for the rehab period. White Lightning was instituted for treating the white line disease. Because instructions to keep the horse clean and dry were not followed the horse continued to have abscesses and white line disease.



Foot after Trim



Burning white line



Burning white line

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Approximately three months after the initial diagnosis, Belle was doing well and we were considering light riding in boots to see how she would hold up. The farrier had obtained pour-in material and, if she was sound in her boots, the plan was to try to get shoes on her. Unfortunately, a mix up at the tack store resulted in the wrong size boots on the horse, causing a pressure abscess on the left front lateral heel bulb. Belle was walking on her toe during the first few days. After the pressure necrosis was treated she remained lame. Anti-inflammatories were difficult to use as she develops coronary band lesions (erosion type lesions) when using phenylbutazone. It was at this point one of my regular farriers suggested that I bring her to the farrier clinic.

Even though the radiographs were not on site - it was obvious to Dave and confirmed by Dr. Churchill that the sole depth was not optimum, with the thin sole compounding the problem and adding to the lameness. Dave indicated his preferred treatment would have been a glue-on with Vettec Equi-Pak to support and protect the sole area but the abscess problems and the need to treat the extensive white line problem worked against that option.

After some discussion, Dave's suggestion to shoe the horse with a leather rim pad and plain shoe was agreed on as a starting point. It is his belief that leather, applied while wet, offers good support without the condensation and problems that can result from the use of plastic. The wet application also lessens the chance of clinches coming loose. The rim pad and a 5/16" thick SX-8 shoe would elevate the foot to help minimize the impact on the sole area. He also cut out some sections of the pad to allow easier access for medicating the abscess and areas affected by white line.

You can also see how Dave approached the white line problem. After thoroughly opening up the areas affected, he cleaned them back to solid hoof. He then used tools he forged from horseshoes to "burn" or cauterize the areas affected by the white line and the abscess. He cautioned the group to always have a vet present for this kind of work.

The left foot was completed and the vet noticed immediate improvement in the way the horse stood on the foot. It seemed that the longer she stood, the more comfortable she was.

After finishing the right foot and trimming the hind feet, the young owner of the horse took the horse out to the arena. The horse followed easily and by the time they got to the soft footing of the arena she seemed to be completely comfortable and trotted from one end of the arena to the other without noticeable lameness.

The vet gave instructions to the owner on treating the abscess area and the areas affected by white line, recommending daily application of *White Lightning*. This was the conclusion of what turned out to be a successful treatment of a problem that had been ongoing for months. The key was communication between the farrier and the vet. Once there was a good understanding of the problems that had occurred up to the moment, it made the job of coming up with treatment options much easier and more likely to succeed.

Dr. Churchill said that "this clinic was possibly the last chance the horse had." So everyone involved was happy with the results of this effort.



**Abscess**



**Shoe fit, drilled for pad rivets**



**Before nailing**



**Marking pad for cutout**



**Marking pad for cutout**



**Ready to nail**



**Pad cutout**



**On foot**



**Nailed**

# FOOT PREP TIPS FOR EQUI-BUILD

By Tab Pigg

The advantages of today's pour-in pad materials, like Equi-Pak and Equi-Build, offer the farrier and vet a new tool in helping the chronic and acute lameness cases they run across. By distributing weight across the entire solar surface or placing support in specific areas, you can provide relief and structural support for the bony column, thereby decreasing the recovery time for the horse.

The key to success with pour-in pads is all in the foot prep. Equi-Build is probably

the best product for changing the foot and providing support but it is also the firmest product on the market. Therefore, foot prep is critical to success. Some people have had problems with Equi-Build causing abscesses. In most cases the abscesses appear in the same place. That place is in the bar area, between the bar and the white line. The bars are an extension of the hoof wall and, just like the wall, the bars will bend. When the bars bend or lay over on the sole it will cause a pressure spot

between the sole and bars. At this point I would refer to the problems as corns not abscesses.

Often when you pull the pads and you pare the sole you will find black spots in the sole and back in the seat of corn. I believe that these are small areas of infection. I will leave the pour pad out for a shoeing so the sole can dry out.

Now on to hoof preparation. I palpate the front half of the foot with my thumbs,

*Continued on page 4*



1 & 2. Before and after shot of bar area that needed more trim to avoid undue pressure or trapping of debris.

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and use hoof testers in the back half. This is just to make sure I don't have any soft spots or pressure points. If I don't find anything wrong, I take out any loose sole that is likely to come out. I do not suggest taking the sole down to shiny, new sole. With Equi-Build, if you do, you may have gone too far. Take only enough to make sure you bond to good foot that will not flake out before the end of the shoeing cycle.

For the hoof prep on the back half of the foot I try to find the bars. When the foot is wet this is sometimes hard to do, as it tends to blend in with the sole. I will take just enough of the bars to stand them up and get them back where they belong. I follow any tracks I find and get them cleaned up. This is very important; if you see black lines or black spots clean them up.

Because these pour-in products are liquid in nature, we can put support where we want it and block it out where we don't want support. If there is a problem in the sole such as an abscess, founder or a soft area, I will block out the area with Play-Doh. I was told about a farrier in TX that uses bread if he does not have Play-Doh. I will bring the Play-Doh up to the ground surface of the shoe. After the pad sets up I remove the Play-Doh, then pack the area with medication and cotton, and wrap with Duct tape. This will give you or your customers a treatment window that is easier to use than a hospital plate

The reason the hoof prep for Equi-Build pads is different than Equi-Pack is the Build does not compress as much as the Pak. Equi-Build does compress and is flexible, just not as much as Pak. This is the reason I prefer the Build over the Pak, it is firmer and provides more support.

Keep in mind environment is everything. If the feet are wet the Equi-Build may be too firm and you will need to stay with Equi-Pak. In a wet environment I would have the owners leave the horse up over night in a dry stall. Overnight the moisture level will drop and the foot will dry out and application of Equi-Build will not be a problem.



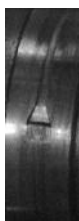
*3, 4, 5 & 6. Areas indicated are of particular concern when applying Equi-Build. Because it is more firm, with less cushion than Equi-Pak, failure to do careful hoof prep can create problems in future.*



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The rolled nail process produces a consistent product that drives where you want it to go. The delicate balance between good tensile strength and material

hardness has been developed over the many years of production of the company.

Clinching is often a good barometer of how a nail will perform and feedback we get indicates the nails clinch without breaking, with a "feel" that gives plenty of confidence.

The production is overseen by a veteran of over 30 years of nail production. His excellent eye and feel for the machinery are instrumental in the success of the nails. The entire production staff are developing the same ability to see the whole process with a clear view and understanding of the steps. From heading to rolling, to the steps of finishing the bevels and points, all aspects of the production are tightly controlled to produce the quality demanded by professionals everywhere.

Look for this brand to continue to grow in popularity. The brand already offers a wide range of sizes, including 3-1/2 and 5 Race, 4-1/2 and 5 Special, 5 City and Slim and E-head styles like VX-50, VX-60 and E-3, 4, 5 & 6 Slim.

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