

12 Points of Reference for Evaluating Limb Balance

By Dave Farley and Roy Bloom

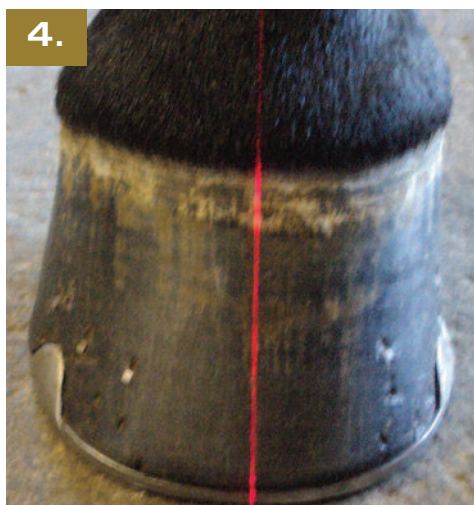
We have developed a list of reference points that have helped us in evaluating limb balance and developing a plan for trimming the hoof to maintain or enhance the balance. We are putting together a series of DVD's that will go into the details of these reference points and how we see them affecting balance. The following list and images give a good overview of those points and will hopefully give you food for thought in your daily work.

1. The knee. While standing to the side of the horse notice the plane of the knee. This is important as the direction of the plane of the knee affects break over. Also, from the same position, look at the cannon bone and its relationship to the knee. Is it normal, or is it offset medial or lateral to the knee?

2. While in front of the limb, draw a perpendicular line down through the center of the cannon bone through the pastern and exiting the center of the hoof.



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3. Look at the coronary band (frontal view) and its relationship to the ground. Compare the medial and lateral lengths of hoof wall from this view.

4. Now check the hoof edge or shape in relationship to the coronary shape.

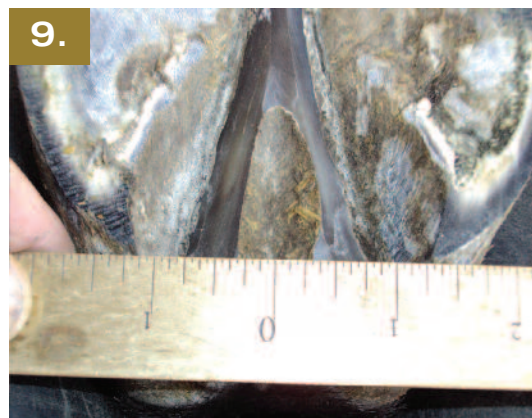
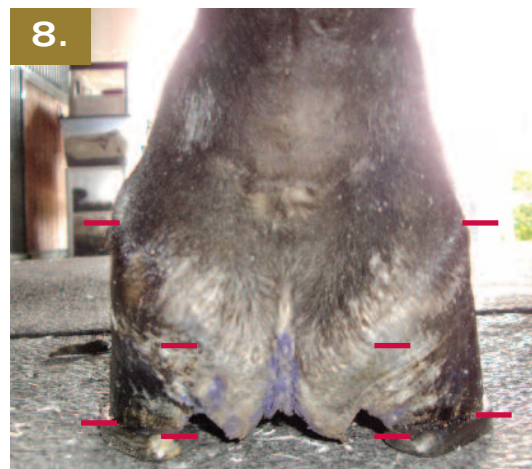
5. From the side (lateral view) of the horse, draw a perpendicular line down through the cannon bone to the highest, widest part of the frog. Position the heels to that point.

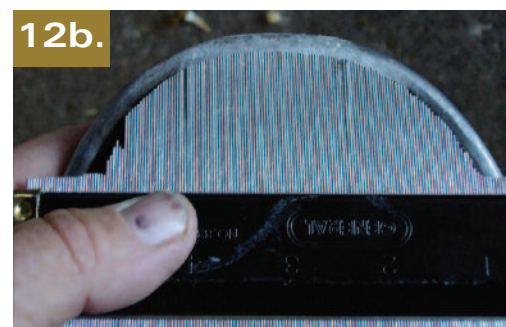
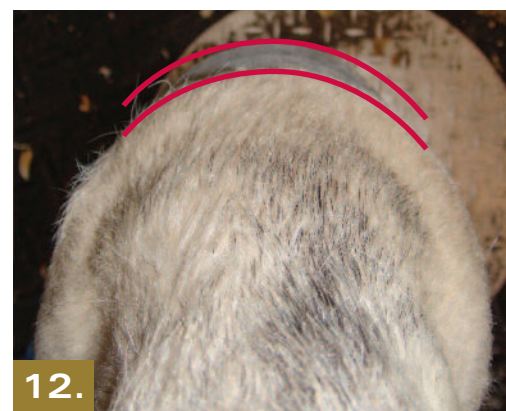
6. From same viewpoint, compare the hoof and pastern alignment. Toe length, heel height and length of pastern should be used to determine normal alignment.

7. From behind the limb (posterior) draw a perpendicular line down the center of the cannon bone through the pastern and through the center of the frog.

8. Also from the posterior view, compare heel heights and both medial and lateral wall heights.

9 & 9a. In the farrier's position (FP) of holding the foot, look at heel positioning in relationship to highest, widest part of frog.





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10. From the same farrier's position (FP) find the medial/lateral center of the frog (approximately 3/8" back from the point of the frog). Measure from that point to the widest part of the quarters, both medial and lateral and compare measurements.

11. From the farrier's position (FP) sight the foot to measure heel length and the level of bottom of foot.

12, 12a & 12b. With hoof on the foot stand, sight over the coronary band to compare the shape of the hoof edge to the coronary band's shape. A contour gauge can be very helpful in comparing coronary band shape to the toe.

The challenge you face in establishing good hoof and limb balance is lessened when you develop your overall perspective of the limb. These reference points are a good guide to help with that effort. It's nearly impossible to accomplish your goal of achieving good balance when looking only at the hoof when in working position. We've found these points of reference to be invaluable in our everyday work. We look forward to going into more detail on the variations we see in these reference points in the video series and future articles. ■

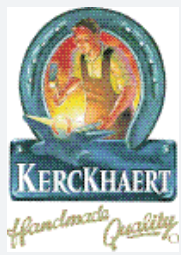


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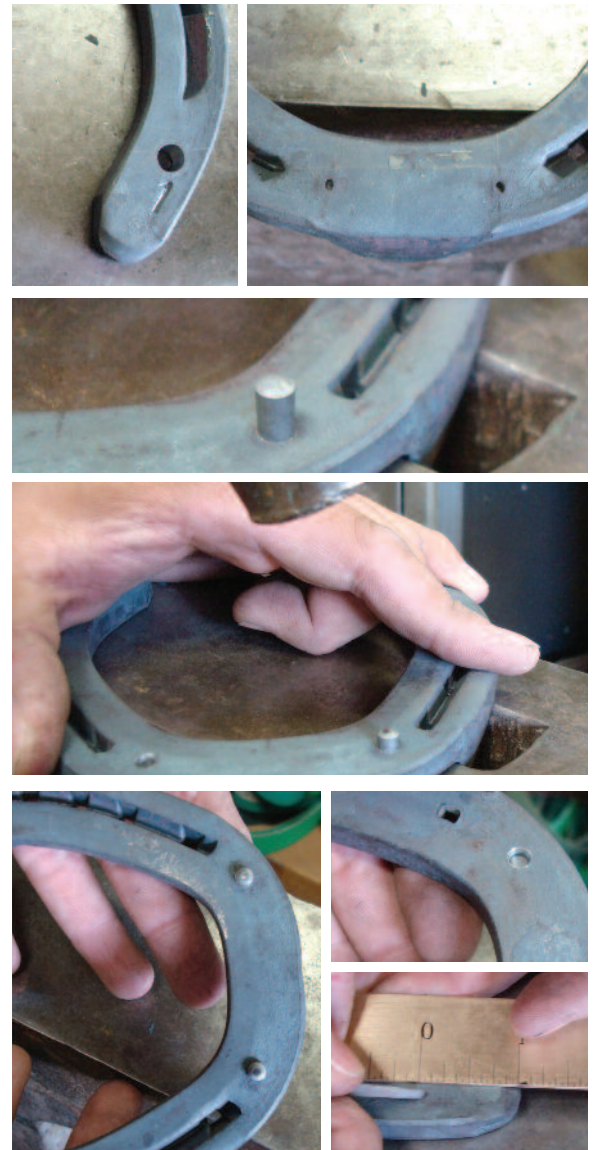
Finally, a sound solution for problems that may occur on synthetic surfaces as a result of too much traction in the hind end. The Synergy XT – available in clipped and unclipped styles.

Application of Tungsten Pins and Drive-in Studs

THERE ARE ANY NUMBER OF TRACTION DEVICES ON THE MARKET TODAY but a few of the most useful and least likely to create problems with the upper limb are the Tungsten pins, drive-in studs and nails with hard facing. All three are easily applied and provide significant security for horses that have to spend any time on blacktop, concrete or slippery rocks. One word of caution – always wear safety glasses any time you are applying traction devices, as there is always a danger of your tool or the material chipping.

The V-Trak nails are simply applied by choosing the position you wish to establish the traction (very often in the heel nail) and driving as you would any other nails. This is a very useful device when you have already shod a horse and find that it needs something to help give it confidence when loading or unloading in a trailer or on the show grounds where there is concrete or blacktop that has to be crossed. The nails are used extensively in the Standardbred market, particularly in the winter months.

Tungsten carbide pins are also easy to apply. They require a smaller drill bit than drive in studs (the fp brand works with a #15 bit) but the 100% tungsten material provides just as much traction as the drive-in stud.



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New Products for 2009

Kerckhaert Horseshoe Company has introduced to the market the clipped version of the popular Steel Triumph series.

These shoes have all the features the market has raved about in the unclipped with the added security of well-balanced clips. The Triumph is noted for it's good heel support, clean punching and sole relief. The shoes are now available in stores in sizes 00 through 3, front and hind.



The Vector Horseshoe Nail line has expanded into the traction market with two sizes of V-Trak nails - 5 City and 4-12 Race. The early response to the nails has been very positive, with indications that the hard facing on the head of the nails is much more secure than other brands and the prices are very competitive. The V-Trak nails are packed in 100 piece boxes.



FPD Drive-in studs are now also available. For those situations you need only enough traction to prevent sliding or slipping on hard surfaces, these studs are very simple to apply. Simply drill with a 17/64" bit and seat the tapered shaft of the stud into the hole. It's



amazing how much confidence your horses will gain when on blacktop or concrete. The studs should also give good traction for trail riding in terrain with large rocky footing.

You will have no more mushroomed and chipped clinch cutters and undercuts when you use the new FDick Nylon Face Hammer from Germany. These hammers have a solid weight that is more than adequate for cutting clinches and doing your undercut work. The tool life is extended and you also avoid the danger of metal chips from either your hammer or struck tool.



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Application of Tungsten Pins and Drive-in Studs • Continued from page 4



For either the pins or studs, you should first center punch the spot you plan to drill. This will help keep the bit from sliding out of position.

To avoid reaming the hole or distorting it, use a drill press or place your shoe in a vise to keep it secure. Once you have the hole drilled, place the pin in from the ground surface and tap into the depth you desire. Avoid bottoming out and making contact with the anvil face or flat surface you are using. The pins are tapered so they will tighten as you drive them in. It is also recommended to use a hammer that has a tempered face so that you don't chip the tool. Another method of driving the pin into place is to flip it over once you have it started, and either on a metal plate or the chisel plate of your anvil, hit the foot surface of the shoe with your

hammer until the pin has seated.

The drive-in studs are applied in exactly the same manner as the tungsten pins. Again, use caution when applying and don't bottom out. The fp brand studs require a 17/64" drill bit.

Typical applications might be a pin or stud in each heel - approximately half way between the end of the shoe and the end of the crease (or last nail hole). This allows the heel landing to still have a slight bit of slide before the traction kicks in. In the toe area it is typical to see the pins or studs placed just in front of the end of the crease. You will have to make your own judgments as to whether you need something in the toe and heel area. Just keep in mind that too much traction may be counterproductive and create soreness or lameness.

