

Fundamentals of Trimming

Many of the most experienced and respected farriers in the industry will tell you that the trim is the most important step in shoeing a horse. If you don't get the trim right then keeping the horse sound and the hoof in good condition is going to be more difficult. We have a few simple suggestions regarding the observations you should make before jumping into the trim of a front foot.

The article by *Bob Pethick* in *Volume 9, Issue 4 of The Natural Angle* had photos of the alignment of the hoof and limb you need to look at before starting on the front foot. Those views should help you to understand the hoof balance as you go through the rest of your pre-trim inspection.

The lateral view will help you to determine if the angle of the hoof lines up with the angle of the pastern. This is one of your important balance

points. You can also check the angle of the heel compared to the toe from this view.

The closer examination of the foot from the front may help you see the medial/lateral balance. Flares can indicate an imbalance that may also be visible when you look at the bottom of the foot. The coronary band will also give you some things to consider. If the hairline is pushed up in one area it may be an indication of pressure from a high spot below that area. Does the coronary band look fairly level? If not, this may also indicate an imbalance in the bottom of the foot.

Always pick up the foot and hold it loosely by the cannon bone. Keep it in close to the body of the horse so that the limb is not twisted. Don't push against the foot with your thumb as this can cause the view to be distorted.

This view of the foot will help you finalize your plans for the trim. Is the hoof capsule squared up with the leg? Look carefully at the distances from the bottom of the hoof to the hairline on each side. Are they the same length? This will give you an indication of your medial/lateral balance. You should be able to see if the foot has more length on one toe quarter versus the other. You can also begin to get a sense of where the heel is in relation to the highest/widest point of the frog. Of course the highest/widest point determination should be made once you have cleaned the frog and heels in the next steps of the trim.

These are simple steps but critical to reaching your goal of a correct trim. Look for more details on the trim in a future issue.

Photos continue on page 6



Lateral view - alignment of hoof and pastern



Front view - check coronary and wall lines.

Avoid Unnecessary Damage to Your Nail Puller

A significant number of crease nail pullers are returned to suppliers each year because of damage that can be avoided – not as a result of defective material or workmanship. It is possible for heat treatment or defective metal to be a problem but be sure you used your tool correctly before returning it.

Be sure that you cut or rasp the clinches off before trying to pull the nails. Start the tool opened as wide as possible to allow the points to penetrate any dirt or debris in the crease and get under the nail head. The nail puller has to get under the head of the nail to work properly. If you only have contact with the tips of the tool and then squeeze and try to pull the nail without first lifting it you are asking for trouble. *(Photo 6 - Page 3 shows damaged tip of nail puller, likely a result of trying to pull the nail before getting the puller tips completely under the nail head. Notice the other puller has no damage and has been used much longer, but more correctly.)*

Once you are under the head, a steady squeezing pressure should pop the nail loose. You can often hear the nail



Start with wide opening.



Puller tips are not under nail head; this method causes damage to tool.

break loose from the crease. You will see that the nail head is fit snugly into the cavity of the pullers if you have used the tool correctly. When the head is in this cavity, the pressure of the rolling motion you use to pull the nail will not cause damage to the tool.

From time to time you may want to touch up the nail puller tips so they can penetrate the debris in the crease and get under the nail head. You should also be sure the tool is not too thick to fit into the crease. If it appears to be

too thick you can use a belt sander to dress them to a thickness that works. Be careful not to grind too aggressively or for too long. You don't want heat to build up and destroy the heat treat. If you can't hold the tool because of the heat or it develops a blue color– it's too hot. Quench it occasionally as you go through this grinding process.

Photos continue on page 3



3

Tips should go under head.



4

Pop head up before pulling.



5

Note full contact of tool to nail head.



6

Older tool on right has been modified and used properly. Fairly new tool on left with broken tip.

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The backings and some of the adhesives used in their manufacture are sensitive to climatic changes and will pick up or lose moisture according to the relative humidity of their surroundings.

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When storing, make sure that abrasives are kept away from sources of dampness and extreme heat or cold.



Excessive humidity can cause a softening of the bond or resin. This causes the abrasive grains to tend to push into the backing rather than penetrate the work piece. Frictional heat builds up tending to further soften the bond. The effect of prolonged exposure to conditions of high humidity can result in a drop in performance of as much as 50% of the normal useful life.

Coated abrasives should be kept in closed cartons until the product is actually used. Don't hang the belts in your truck – keep them protected from temperature and humidity changes.

Information Source – VSM Abrasives Corporation

Causes

BELT BREAKS

Work pressure too heavy

Incorrectly made splice/poor adhesion

Not enough belt tension under work load

Too much tension for grit in use

BELT RUNS OFF MACHINE

Tracking mechanism not adjusted properly

Belt runs off under load

Grinding pressure too high

Corrections

Reduce pressure, perhaps using coarser grit or changing belts more often so it doesn't require as much pressure.

Notify manufacturer.

Increase tension but don't over-tighten.

Adjust tension. Tension should not be more than required under load to prevent slippage.

Use centering device to get even movement.

Increase tension.

Reduce pressure or change grit or belt.

Time to Make Your Christmas List

Christmas is just around the corner and we have a few items that you might want to put on your Christmas list (or treat yourself). The products pictured are available at your farrierproducts' dealer.

TOOL MAINTENANCE VIDEO

Roy Bloom walks you through the steps of regular maintenance of some common tools such as your tongs, punches and hammer. This video is available in VHS or DVD format. Hot Iron Productions has also come out with DVD versions of Volume 2, Basic Shoemaking and Volume 4, Cowpies and Clips.



NAIL CUTTERS

Everyone needs a reliable, durable nail cutter and your farrierproducts' dealer has a nice selection. The newest in the line, the Ultra Cut, has an amazing amount of leverage and makes one handed cutting almost effortless. Made by Knipex, the tool is modified by FPD to allow you to get close to the hoof wall with your cut. Other nail cutters include the Knipex 12" Power Cut, Knipex 8" cutter with plastic handles and the Bellota 9" cutter, all re-finished by FPD to give better performance.



BLOOM KNIVES

Look for the new Bloom Offset Blade in your supply house. Made with high carbon steel and a very comfortable handle, these knives complement the regular blade knife that has been receiving high marks in the market.



SHARPENING WHEELS

Don't forget that no matter what kind of knife you use, you will have to sharpen and hone the edge to get maximum performance. The combination of the 6" Buffing/Sharpening wheel and the 6" felt wheel with groove can help you get your blades to shaving sharpness. The wheels are best mounted on a grinder that runs at around 1800 rpm, this helps avoid the heat buildup that can destroy your heat treat. Baldor makes a nice 1/4 hp unit that runs at 1800 rpm and has longer shafts that give you more clearance from the motor.



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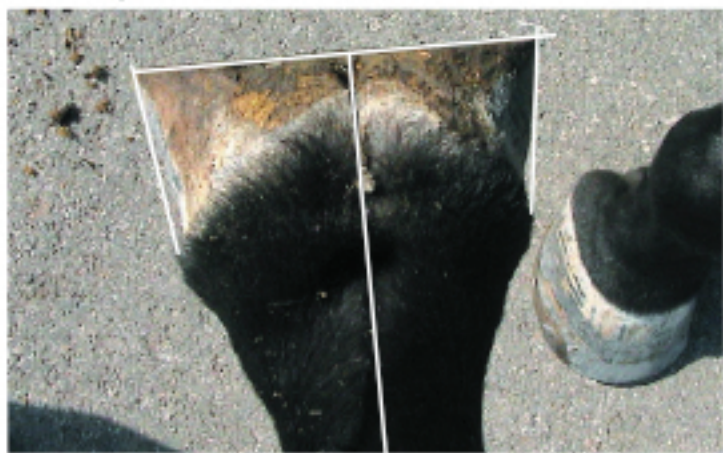


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"Fundamentals of Trimming" Continued from cover



Best way to hold front foot.



Check wall lengths and alignment to leg.

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Last look before trim.