

The Natural Angle

A PUBLICATION OF PRACTICAL IDEAS AND SOLUTIONS FOR FARRIERS

Volume 5: Issue 1

Shoe Fit Beyond the Perimeter

THE LAST ISSUE of the Natural Angle addressed some of the fundamentals of good hoof prep. The ideas are not just one of the basic aspects of certification testing. The reality in today's horse world is that the farriers that give special attention to the trim and finish are farriers that are keeping horses sound and customers happy. This always pays off when it comes time to write the bills and collect for the work. The quality of shoes available in today's market has given many farriers additional time to spend on their hoof prep.

Companies like Kerckhaert are making shoes that have good shapes, nail placement and require minimal work to finish. The pictures in this article will give you some indication of the fit that many farriers are targeting in their everyday work. In comparison, the perimeter fit required in the AFA certification test deals more with the mechanics of shaping and applying a set of objective standards. It is not recommended as the way to fit all your shoes. But if you can meet the standard, your ability to fit as you feel is most beneficial to the particular horse you are shoeing, is fairly easy to do. In the past, many farriers



struggled to fit factory shoes to give the expansion and support they felt was needed. This was difficult because of the tendency of drop forged shoe manufacturers to make a tapered branch- often ending up with a relatively narrow heel. It was almost impossible to fit the shoe full at the heel quarters and still have good hoof bearing on the shoe. You will notice today that the Kerckhaert shoes, no matter what the style, have an even width all the way to the heel cut. This allows the shoe to be fit full, scotched or boxed, and still carry the hoof load.

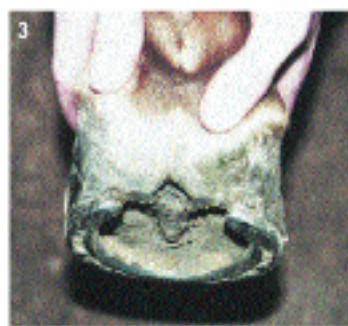
For many shoers, the goal is to fit the shoe to the coronary band, not the perimeter of the wall. A perfect wall perimeter matched to the coronary is the



1,2 Typical foot that has gone too long between shoeings, not wall over shoe and long toe.

3 Shoe has narrow heels, making it difficult to fit for growth or expansion.

4 Try to fit shoe to match coronary band shape, box or bevel edges to minimize risk.



ultimate goal. But most of the time you don't see the perfect match and you have to fit your shoes accordingly. One aspect of your fit will be to make sure the frog is in the center of the shoe when you measure from side to side. This is one of the easiest guides to shoe position from the medial-lateral perspective. You



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Shoe Fit

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may fit one side full and the other snug to get this balance. If you are concerned with the fullness of any area use a belt sander or grinder and taper the shoe from the wall to the ground surface. If you are heating the shoe to fit you can also hammer finish some of the bevel you are looking for.

Under-run heels on the front and hind present the most common challenge. The trim would be your first step but in fitting the shoes your first effort to correct this situation might be to widen the branches, boxing them to lessen the chance of them being stepped off. At the same time you will probably extend the heels to give better support. This condition sometimes has to be addressed with more than just a little extra expansion and length and you could consider the egg bar shoe. But this article is mainly concerned with the fit of open shoes. Another



5,6,7,8 This shows fit to broaden toe and expansion to inside that is boxed off. Shoe was centered to frog.

9 Right Hind, with good length and plenty of room on outside for expansion.

10 Left Hind, boxed even more on inside to avoid shoe being stepped on. Both left and right have been set back to allow easier breakover.

11 This angle gives you a good look at bevel of branches that match up to the hoof wall angle.

common occurrence is to see toes that are long and pointed. This is often just a result of too much time between shoeings. But it can be a result of continuing to perimeter fit shoes- and using shoes that have too much point in the toe. Farriers today are having good success using shoes that have a nicely rounded toe for the fronts- sometimes even

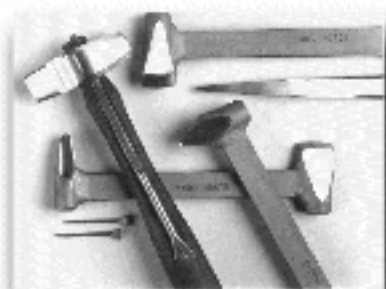


making them bolder than the pre-shaped front shoes. On the hind end a boxed toe- not necessarily squared, is working well for many horses. Any time you see an expanded white line at the toe- and especially if you see discoloration or bruising- you can feel secure in fitting the toe broader and even backing it up. The expansion, discoloration and bruising are all a result of stress, indicating breakover is a problem.

Don't expect the changes you make in shoe shape to correct imbalance, poor hoof shape or wall condition in the first shoeing. You need to make sure your owner understands the problems didn't develop overnight and you can't correct them that quickly either. Go as far as is reasonable in working towards the goal of matching the hoof shape to the coronary band. Evaluate the shoes you are using to be sure they are punched well enough for you to fit fuller. Check also to see that the branches have enough

material to allow you to box or taper the web to minimize the chances of the shoe being pulled. If the heels are too narrow you will find it nearly impossible to change your fit to improve the under-run or crushed heels.

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There are as many ways to set up a shoeing rig as there are farriers. The goal is to make certain that the rig is equipped and set up for maximum efficiency. Very few of your clients will pay you for time and energy wasted.

Setting up a rig shouldn't be complicated. It is much better to keep everything simple and easy to organize—from the work area to the storage of your supplies. There are many different types of rigs from the more specific farrier bodies like the Monetta Farrier Specialties and Stone Well Bodies to

generic caps. No matter what you choose, do all you can do to set it up for maximum efficiency. Keep it neat and organized—after all your clients see your rig as an indication of your attention to detail.

The cost of buying a body and outfitting it is an investment in your business and your image. Going cheap does not always make good economic sense. The body is a long-term investment and should serve you well for quite a few years.

There are a lot of creative ideas out there and you

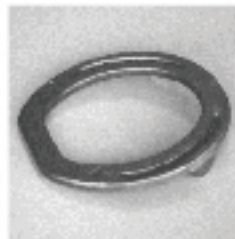


shouldn't hesitate to use them. In addition to the forge and anvil don't underestimate the value of having a belt sander and drill press on your rig. You need to be sure you buy power equipment that is durable and will stand

up to the daily rigors of your work.

Our thanks to Monetta Farrier Specialties of South Carolina and Stone Well Bodies and Equipment of New York for the photos used in this article.

What's New at Kerckhaert?



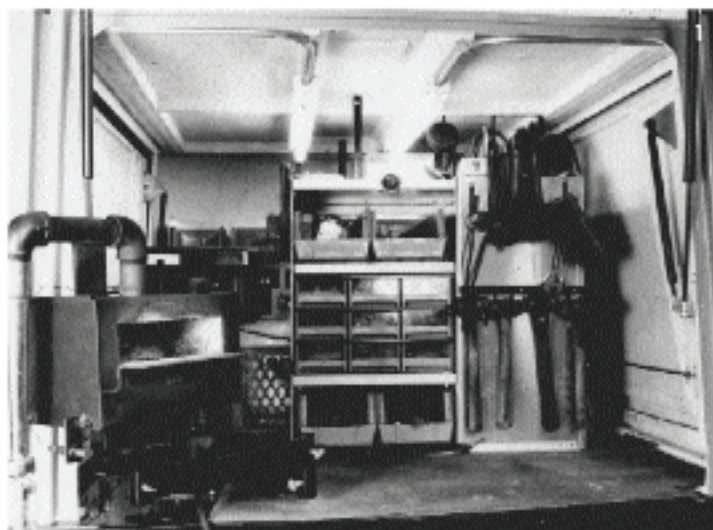
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The Natural Angle

1 The back end of this rig is set up so that the forging area is free of any clutter and tools are close at hand.

2 This is another Manetta body with a swingout arm for the forge.

3 From the side of this rig you have access to (left to right) a pad cutter, a manual tapper and a combination belt sander/grinder. The pads are stored above the area.



4 The shoe rack should be easy to get to and give you enough holders to separate the different styles and sizes of shoes.

5 The shoe rack is even more critical if you use a topper or cap instead of a full body. You have to make it easy to get to the shoes.

6 You can never have too many storage bins. These protect your nails and other miscellaneous shoeing items.

7 This rig has all the good stuff. Drill presses, grinder, vise, belt sander and bandsaw. All lined up to allow for efficient access.

8 Slide outs can help make the access to the power equipment much easier.

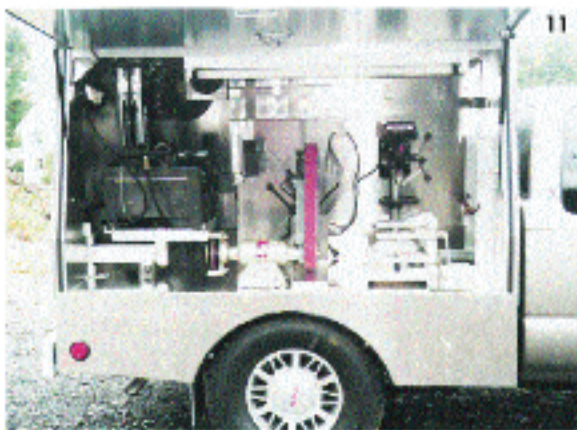
9 While welders are not always needed these days, storage of one like this can conserve on floor space. Notice the reels in the upper right hand corner for power cords, etc.



10 This full slide-out deck was made by a farmer in Canada. The deck carries all his major equipment and he has full access through the sides of his rig to miscellaneous supplies.



11 Keep it simple but put in the equipment that saves you time and makes you money.



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TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE STRONG ECONOMY

The strong economy that the US and other parts of the world have been experiencing has had a positive impact on the equine world as well. The recreational use of the horse has increased in intensity, if not. There have been no recent figures on horse population but throughout the US and Canada many areas report higher usage and participation in shows.

What does this mean for the farrier industry? As we all know, the recreational nature of most horse use is affected by the disposable income of the owner. Most owners want to take good care of their horses, it just gets tough if the income is not available. The economy has developed to a point that most owners are comfortable making good hoof-care decisions. This is the best opportunity you have had in many years to develop good habits and programs with your customers.

Start by developing a firm scheduling program. Educate your owners to the benefits of regularly scheduled maintenance. You might even add an additional charge for work that is not on a schedule. (Or

you can try the reverse, setting the price at the higher level and discounting it if they agree to the scheduling)

Set shoeing prices based on one fee- whether you reset or use new shoes. This means you can make the decision to reset based on the condition of the shoes, not on the customers willingness to pay. Make sure your customer understands the benefits of using new shoes instead of trying to get "one more reset" out of shoes that are worn in the toes or have sloppy nail holes.

Establish firm payment policies and make sure your clients follow them. If you can't get them to adhere to good payment policies while the economy is strong imagine what you are going to be up against when

times are not so good.

This is the time to establish good habits and set profitable prices. And don't forget to invest some of your earnings- for the long term retirement aspect as well as for savings to draw on when the economy may not be so good for the horse world.

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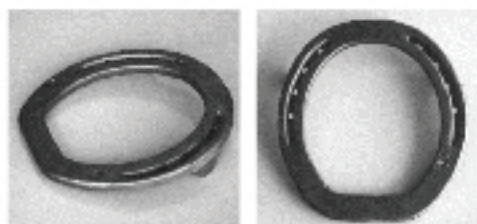
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Bloom Forge is now making a straight pein hammer in 1-3/4 and 2lb weights. This hammer is drop forged, providing a very durable tool.

Natural Angle Website

The NA website received a major overhaul recently. Check out the new info, features and design at www.naturalangle.com

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