

The Natural Angle

A PUBLICATION OF PRACTICAL IDEAS AND SOLUTIONS FOR FARRIERS

Volume 6: Issue 3

SIMPLE STEPS LEAD TO CONSISTENT CLINCHING

TWO METHODS of clinching are the hammer clinch and the use of a clinching tool. Both methods have the same goal - to provide a neat, safe and effective clinch. In recent years, many farriers have come to rely almost completely on the clincher in their finish work. The following ideas and pictures illustrate some of the steps that can be used in this method. No matter what method you use, your clinches should be of consistent length and smooth when completed. Long clinches add no strength to the job.



1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



6.



7.

Unless you are in an old nail hole you will always get a bit of hoof pushed out under the nail. It is most obvious after you have blocked the nails and are getting ready to do the clinching. If you are careful with the smooth side of your rasp or finish file you can clean this up by running the file or rasp under the nail. If you don't take care with this method you can leave unsightly lines between the nails. Some believe these lines, which are often parallel to the ground, create a weakness in the wall, something like cutting glass. It is also very difficult to create a "bed" to set the clinch in using this method.

To avoid the possibility of weakening the wall or leaving unsightly marks you can use the undercut method. The photos we have here illustrate the steps.

Start by using the clincher to pull the nail to a 90 degree angle to the wall. Then cut the nail very close to the wall. You want to leave only enough nail to be able to grab it with your clincher.

After cutting the nail, use the undercut to cut a scoop or create a bed for the clinch to go in. This allows your clinch to be squeezed tight against the hoof without leaving nail on the outer surface to be filed off. In the end you have more nail mass at the bend of the clinch, providing a much stronger clinch and a flush fit with the wall.

Continued on Page 2

- 1 & 2** Nails have been blocked.
- 3 & 4** Clincher is used to pull nail to approximately 90 degree angle from wall.
- 5** Nail is cut almost flush with wall.
- 6 & 7** Undercut can be used to make "bed" for clinch.

CONSISTENT CLINCHING Continued from Page 1



When clinching, don't yank downward in a raking motion. This can tear more hoof below the clinch if the motion is too strong and at the very least leave unsightly marks. You should be able to squeeze the clinchers with a very light motion and bend the clinch over. This squeezing pushes the clinch back into the bed you have created. You might even find that a slight upward motion of your tool, while squeezing, produces a neater clinch, and job, than if you rake downward.

There are a number of clinchers available. The traditional saddle horse clincher is the most commonly used. There are a couple of newer styles on the market including curved jaw versions and the Lopez Style which has an angled head making it easier to position your hands to make the squeeze to do the clinch. n

8 & 9 With clincher you now squeeze the clinch over - don't use raking motion.

10 Finished job with clinches lightly filed and sand blocked.

11 & 12 If you use a file or rasp to clean under clinches work carefully to avoid leaving line or other marks on wall.

14 & 15 Clinching with this Lopez Style clincher you only need to squeeze to finish clinch- not rake or pull them down at an angle.

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MAXIMIZING YOUR ENERGY EFFICIENCY

The significant increases in energy costs in the past year, including propane, gasoline and natural gas have caused many of us to look for ways to reduce our consumption. There are many tips that we can apply that can result in lower consumption. The challenge, like always, is disciplining ourselves to adhere to the tips. We have a number of ideas related to your vehicle operation as well as some for gas forges.

Most farriers end up racking up significant numbers of miles while carrying a load that is well beyond that of most commuters. It may be useful to start with some idea of what your fuel costs are. Then when you consider some of the tips that are known to conserve fuel you can get a better sense of how much money you could save.

We'll make some assumptions to give you a formula to work with. You can use the same

formula and plug your figures in to come up with your annual costs of vehicle fuel.

Annual mileage	25,000
÷ miles per gallon	15
= gallons of fuel	1,666.67
x Cost of fuel (per gallon)	\$1.50
= Total annual cost of fuel	\$2,500.00

It adds up to be a significant cost, one that is important to know in order to understand one of the costs of shoeing horses. Divide the annual cost of fuel by the number of horses you work on in a year and you will begin to see how critical it is to break down your shoeing costs considering all the variables. And remember that fuel costs are only one of your vehicle costs.

Now that you know your cost you are faced with the challenge of reducing it, raising prices to cover it or both. You may be able to find a less expensive source for fuel but this is too often out of your control. Think about some of the following tips that may help you reduce consumption. Many are likely to be something you've heard before but there is no doubt that these are proven methods to reduce consumption. So the challenge for you may be just to force yourself to follow them.

DRIVING HABITS

Avoid lengthy warm-up time, but drive away gently until the engine has reached its normal operating temperature.

Don't start and stop engine more than necessary- idling for one minute reportedly consumes the gas amount equivalent to when you start your engine.

Use heat and air conditioning sparingly - the load this creates can reduce fuel economy by 10-20%.

Drive smoothly- quick acceleration cuts down on fuel economy. A lot of slowing down and speeding up also consumes more fuel. Build speed before you get to hills rather than waiting to accelerate.

Use of your cruise control can be a fuel saver on long trips.

This one's tough, but traveling at 55mph gives you more than 20% better mileage than running at 65-70.

Rough roads, particularly gravel or dirt can decrease efficiency by 30%.

VEHICLE ISSUES

A manual transmission will perform more efficiently than an automatic provided you don't run in lower gears at high speeds.

Make sure vehicle is tuned regularly -with both gas and diesel engines make sure fuel and air filters are changed on a regular basis.

Tire pressure is critical. Always run at maximum pressure. Off road or snow tread will decrease efficiency- the deeper the tread the less efficient the tire- and radials typically get the best mileage. A tire with a larger radius can be an asset. Tire balance and front end alignment should be checked regularly.

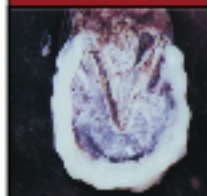
Make sure you have a proper fit on your fuel cap - gas can evaporate quickly in hot temperatures, sometimes as much as 5 gallons a month!

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

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MAXIMIZING CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Buy gasoline at the coolest time of day- this is when it is densest.

YOUR RIG

Very tall caps or bodies will increase wind resistance - try to factor this in your decision when buying either. Of course you need to control the weight of the rig so fiberglass or aluminum will generally be better than steel.

Develop a good inventory system so you are not carrying unnecessary supplies. Putting up some shelving in your shop or garage, to stock from, can keep you from trying to put it all in the truck. The organization will also help you when you are doing your ordering.

Get in the habit of cleaning out your rig from time to time to avoid the accumulation of old shoes, unnecessary stock, etc.

Design your shelving and work area to be as light as possible while still getting the strength you need.

SAVING PROPANE

Bob Shantz of Spanish Lake Blacksmith shop offers some helpful hints on propane use and safety. Propane costs climbed this past year along with gas, diesel and other

energy sources. While there has been some recent decline in prices energy conservation always makes good business sense.

Check every connection and eliminate leaks.

Keep your hoses and tanks in good condition.

After your forge has been burning for about 5 minutes you can reduce consumption by slightly closing the valve at the forge. Maintain the manufacturers recommended operating pressure, just restrict the volume that enters the burners by adjusting the on-off valve. As you close the valve you will find a "sweet spot" where the forging heat is maintained with less fuel consumption.

Adjust the fuel regulator to the size of steel and the heat you need. When working on smaller sizes of steel lower the pressure, when welding or working on heavy steel increase the pressure just enough to get the job done.

When working a pair of shoes and you are near completion, shut the burners completely off with one shoe remaining in the heating chamber. The residual heat will keep the shoe ready to forge for several minutes. If you have a door keep it closed when not taking a shoe in or out. Just be sure your pressure is balanced to allow for less air coming in.

Never leave the forging area while the forge is running. Many times you get distracted and the forge continues to burn - wasting fuel and possibly becoming a safety threat. When buying propane look for a source that charges by volume - not by the tank. If you are paying for fuel on a flat fee tank basis you should always have a second tank and make sure you run each tank empty before filling. Don't overfill! **n**



1. Inflate tires to maximum pressure. **2.** Under inflated tires cause more fuel consumption. **3.** Steel cap is heavier than aluminum or fiberglass but note this one is not extending high above cab. **4.** This cap is above cab but has special design to help eliminate wind resistance. **5.** Make sure your valves and hoses are not leaking - the valve at forge can also be used to control flow. **6.** Run at recommended pressures and always use a regulator. **7.** A door can be helpful to hold heat in chamber



CUTTING RISKS CAN IMPROVE CASH FLOW

Every business has to consider policies regarding credit sales or transactions. As a business, a farrier faces these same issues.

Through the years, we've heard many complaints about collection problems. There are a number of ways to address the problems.

You may decide that you will only accept work that will pay you cash at the time the services are performed. This is probably the safest policy and certainly offers the best cash flow results. But this is often not practical. You may work for stables or riding centers that require you to bill the owners. This is where your credit policies become important.

If you are comfortable with a billing period for your customers you need to be sure you are clear with your policies and expectations. Otherwise a billing that is to be paid in 10 days stretches to 30 or 30 to 60 and you are faced with poor cash flow. If you are going to establish

open accounts you need to be clear and firm. Don't continue with open accounts that are habitually overdue.

A few farriers have established merchant accounts with banks in order to be able to accept credit card payments. This can provide a very sure way to collect for the work you are doing and the percentage the bank takes is something that can be built into your pricing.

The advantages of accepting credit cards are; **a.** Payment is received almost instantly. **b.** There is almost no risk if you have the necessary information. **c.** Cash flow is enhanced by receiving your funds quickly. **d.** Some of your clients may put off work if they don't have cash but if they can use their credit card they may go ahead with it. **e.** It is viewed as another customer service that you provide, enhancing your image as a professional.

Check with your local bank to see if they have a program for you.

The American Farrier's Association now has a program in place for its members through the Fifth Third Bank. This may be just the membership benefit you have been looking for. You can call the AFA for more info: 859-233-7411.

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Five Days of Horseshoeing in Lexington

The 2002 American Farrier's Association Convention will feature 5 days of solid shoeing content. This Convention, hosted by the Bluegrass Horseshoers Association, is filled with shoeing demonstrations and supplemented with shoeing lectures. Any farrier, vet or horseowner interested in improving their skills and knowledge of the trade should make plans to attend March 5-9, 2002.

The Convention begins with two days of competition at the Kentucky Horse Park. The competition includes a number of individual forging classes on March 5th with the two-man Draft shoe class and the live shoeing running on March 6th. The program will be accompanied by "play by play" details and close up video shots to enhance the experience. The contest is an exciting part of the convention and draws farriers from throughout North America as well as countries overseas.

The feature demonstrations and lectures begin on Thursday, March 7 and will take place at the Lexington Center in downtown Lexington. Adjacent to two major hotels, the Hyatt Regency and the Radisson, the Lexington Center is a great venue for the lectures. Seating for over 1,200 with everything projected onto a large screen (15'x20') guarantees there is not a bad seat in the house. The use of special video equipment for the live demonstrations and lectures made Lexington '99 one of the best conventions ever. Combining the same technology with a solid farrier based program gives everyone reason to

believe that Lexington 2002 will be even more successful. There will be live shoeing demonstrations by members of the American Farrier's Team and Certification Committee on day one and two. There will be shoeing demonstrations by other members of the Association during the three day program, including Bob Parks and Dave Harvey. There will also be a demonstration on farrier tool maintenance by Roy Bloom, an anatomy lecture by one of the country's leading farrier educators, Mitch Taylor, and a practical business lecture by Tom Parris, a Md. farrier who has a successful multi-farrier business. A special guest for this year's Convention is Tracy Turner, a veterinarian with a farrier background from the University of Minnesota, who has a special perspective and a tremendous delivery. You won't be bored by any of these great program segments.

The Marketplace takes the spotlight on Wednesday and Thursday evening and Friday afternoon. Organized by the Farrier Industry Association, the Marketplace is the largest gathering of farrier manufacturers and suppliers anywhere. In addition to all the live demos in the main hall, there are other educational venues including dissection labs and a video learning center as well as membership and committee meetings. Other special features of the Convention include an auction that contains numerous hand made ornamental pieces and other special works of art, and the banquet and awards ceremony on the final night.

The Convention packets will be ready in the near future. For details on all aspects of the AFA Convention contact the AFA office at 859-233-7411 or email them at info@americanfarriers.org. n

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