

The Natural Angle

A PUBLICATION OF PRACTICAL IDEAS AND SOLUTIONS FOR FARRIERS

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When the Farrier is the Vet

The Rood & Riddle Equine Hospital in Lexington, Kentucky offers clients a service that is not common to many practices. They have a fully equipped Thermo-Podiatry center headed by Dr. Scott Morrison. Dr. Morrison is not only a veterinarian but has been shoeing horses since completing the farrier program at Danny Ward's Eastern School of Farriery in 1991. He completed his veterinary studies at Virginia Tech in 1999. Dr. Morrison has a full time farrier on staff, Manfred Ecker, with 11 years shoeing experience. Together with other full time staff, including technician Loryn McAninch, they provide services for a wide range of cases. They have also initiated an internship program and Bob Agne from NC State is currently working in the shop. In a typical day, they will work on a variety of lameness or hoof issues, including foals with angular limb deformities, club feet in yearlings, heel sore performance horses, and full-blown laminitis cases and severe injuries. They



also perform various surgical procedures related to lower limb problems, and foot infections.

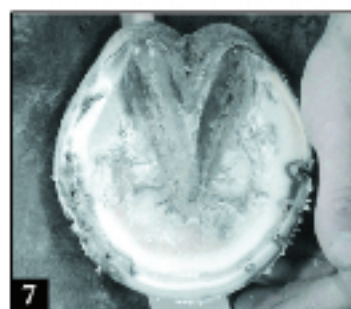
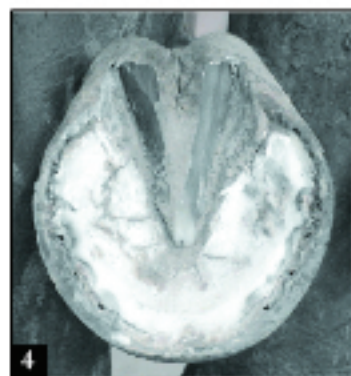
Many cases come to the clinic with obvious problems and the diagnosis is fairly easy to reach. But they have clients come with lameness problems that are not so easily identified (photo 1). The typical procedure that is followed here illustrates an ideal solution to handling lameness cases. But, of course, this facility offers a great advantage in the all-in-one location service they can provide.

Dr. Morrison will typically begin by discussing the case with the farrier if possible. A discussion with the owners is also included in the work up. He then watches the horse in motion on firm footing to try to determine the general location of the lameness (front/hind, left/right) (photo 2). In the case we observed, the lameness was not severe and appeared to be in the right front. He did a check with hoof testers and got a response only when applying pressure to the medial heel area (photo 3).



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The center has a complete shop, including a coal forge, where many therapeutic devices are built from scratch. In this case, Manfred Ecker built the shoe according to the specs given to him by Dr. Morrison (photos 9 & 10). He used a 1/2" x 1" aluminum bar stock for this job. He had to bump the heels up to develop the wedge and forge the toe to get the width they were looking for. It's not unusual to see Ecker building special shoes, including shoes to help open the heels of yearlings being prepped for sales and foal extensions (photo 11). But many of the cases they see don't require special shoes and they carry a good range of Triumph (flat and Degree), race plates and steel shoes from Kerckhaert.

While Ecker works on building shoes, Dr. Morrison will go on to the next case - and there is always one waiting. Not all the work is done in the ideal conditions of the clinic and Dr. Morrison has a fully equipped shoeing rig that he uses for farm calls.

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The horse was then taken into the shop where they took radiographs, lateral and dorsal ventral on the right front, and lateral only on the left. The right radiograph was taken with the shoe pulled but before trimming and with both feet up on blocks (photos 4 & 5). Once the radiographs were completed he explained his diagnosis to the clients, using the radiographs and bone models to help (photo 6). In this instance he felt that the primary problem was a lack of sufficient sole depth in the heel area. But he also indicated the club foot condition of the left front would respond to a roller motion shoe.

The treatment was pretty straight forward. He began by trimming to what he felt was a better balance (photo 7). He did a slight bevel of the toe, as his plan was to put a hand forged, wide web wedge with roller motion on the right and a flat aluminum with roller motion on the left. After completing the trim, tracings of the hoof were taken. The feet were then wrapped and the horse taken back to a stall to be shod later in the day (photo 8).

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On this morning he had a laminitic horse in the clinic that had undergone a surgery to immobilize the joints of the left front (arthrodesis). This was a valuable brood mare and the goal was to keep her as comfortable as possible. The shop has an overhead hoist to be used with a sling when necessary to keep the horse

comfortable. In this case, the horse seemed to be comfortable enough on the left front to allow the right to be shod. The right limb has been bearing most of the weight. A wide-web aluminum heart bar was used to give as much support as possible.

There is a lot of teamwork involved in a clinic situation like this one at Rood & Riddle. But it is also a good model for the cooperation necessary out in the field, when the farrier is not the vet but has a case that requires the assistance of one. The same steps need to take place, but of course the communication, that is much simpler when the farrier is the vet, is critical and requires more effort when the farrier is not the vet. ■

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THE TOOL CORNER

Equipment Usage for Daily Applications

Articles in past issues have focused on techniques, tools and other methods of bringing more efficiency into the daily routine of shoeing horses. We've assembled some images of the more common daily applications for various abrasives equipment. You have to decide what kind of equipment works best in your rig and your practice. But don't undervalue the time savings that can be realized.

Hoof Buffer Attachment

For years, everyone has used a second rasp, finishing file and/or sanding blocks to put the final finish on the outer wall. Now there is a hoof buffer that can help you get a perfect "10" on your wall finish. This hoof buffer attaches to a cordless drill; we've heard that an 18v unit performs best. The buffer has an inflatable bladder that holds the sanding sleeve in place and allows you to follow the contours of the wall. You will need a small air pump when changing sleeves. As you can see from the images, the finish you get is excellent, all the way to the coronary band - and with far less effort than files or sanding blocks require.



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Belt Sanders

A belt sander is one of the most versatile pieces of equipment in today's farrier rig. It can be used to bevel toes, heels or make other modifications to a shoe. If you are shaping cold this is a lifesaver. Working hot you might begin your bevels with the hammer as you shape the shoe but the belt sander puts a nice blend and final appearance on it. If you are using shoes that are wider in the heels to give more support, a belt sander can be very helpful to



get the bevels you need to blend the fit and save the shoe. There are a number of belt options for shoes: Zirconia (blue) is the most durable as it has a very hard crystal. Aluminum Oxide (brown) belts are

less expensive but don't last as long. Depending on how aggressive you want to be, a 24, 36 or 40 grit belt will usually work very well for shoes. If you want a bit smoother finish you can go to 60 or 80 grit.

The MultiTool 2"x36" belt sander attachment is gaining in popularity. It is compact and the large drive wheel provides



the speed for maximum performance. It can be attached to most 6" or 8" grinders. You get at least twice the belt speed of the average belt sander. Be sure to use a grinder unit that can handle the work. A 1/2hp motor or larger will perform well unless it is one of the very light economy models sold at the mass merchandisers. MultiTool also offers an air-cooled, 3/4hp unit with a 2"x36" attachment already on. In the Jet brand line you can buy a 1/2hp unit with a 2"x48" belt sander and 6" grinding wheel. If you want to buy a grinder only, Jet also offers a powerful 1hp unit to which you can attach a MultiTool.

Sole Relief

Many shoers are putting some sole relief into their shoes. It can be a little difficult getting to the inside edges with a belt sander but there are a couple tools that are very handy for this job. The PortaGrind unit is a hand held belt sander that has a 1"x24" belt and is very easy to work around the shoe, inside and out. It can provide a good option if you don't have the space for a bench grinder unit, plus it is very economical. The other option is the use of flap discs on an angle grinder - either 4-1/2" or 7" Zirconia will work. If you are only using it for the sole relief a smaller unit will work just fine. The recommended belt grits and types are the same as for the larger bench units.



Tools

The belt sander is also very useful for maintenance and repair of tools. For tools you should use different belts from those used on the shoes. Most of the time your work on tools is not aggressive, unless you have let them go for too long. Zirconia belts work best when the grind is very aggressive, like the grind on shoes, which is constantly breaking the crystals. With tools you are not going to get good results with Zirconia. It will be difficult to break the crystals and you will end up with a glazed surface on the belt. The Aluminum Oxide belts are a better choice. You

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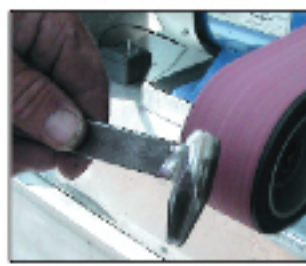
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can also get an orange belt made by 3M that has a coolant already added. These belts are more expensive but they will last and help minimize the heat build up. The grit choices are many, but an 80 grit belt is a good starting point for the rough in, then you can go to 100 or 120 for a smoother finish. Of course there are belts much finer than this if you are looking for an even smoother finish. The pictures indicate a few tool situations that fit into the belt sander scope. All of your struck tools should be dressed on the struck end to avoid chipping or pieces breaking away after severe mushrooming.

Fine tuning your pritchels and punches and even clinch cutters is a very simple chore with the belt sander.

Final note: Always wear safety glasses and use caution around power equipment. Make sure your clients are not in the path of sparks or grinding particles. ■



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