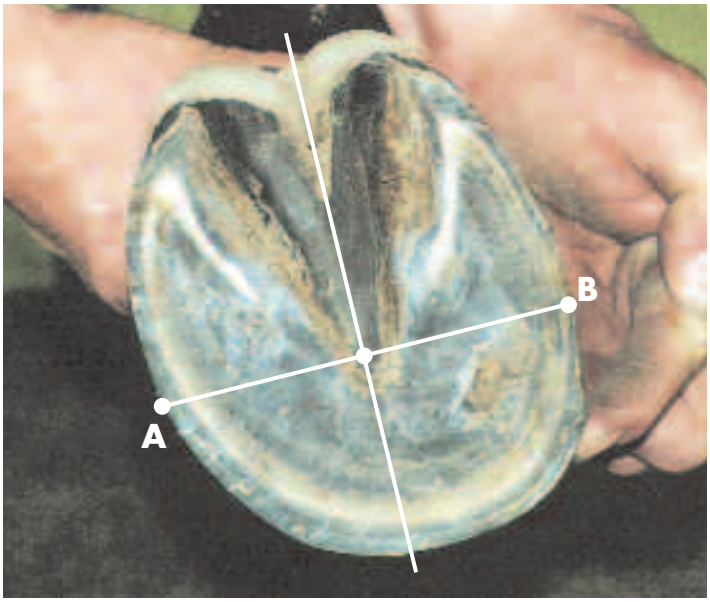
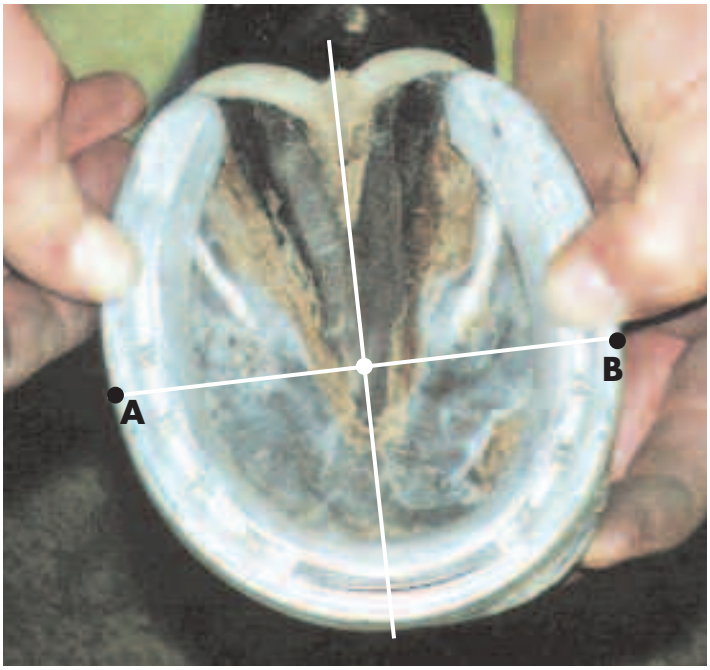
The Natural Angle
A PUBLICATION OF PRACTICAL IDEAS AND SOLUTIONS FOR FARRIERS
VOLUME 2: ISSUE 1

Fitting Shoes for Balance





BY **DAVE FARLEY**

Some of the ideas I apply to fitting shoes for balance have been discussed in prior issues. I'll list these goals for your review.

Goals

1. Establish good hoof/pastern alignment.
2. Trim foot flat
3. Use flat shoe
4. Have foot land as flat as possible.

Begin your work by looking carefully at the hoof. Look from all angles, including from above and from behind. Mitch Taylor's article about basic hoof preparation in Vol. 1 issue 4 of *The Natural Angle* discusses the importance of your close examination of the whole picture.

Starting with the front foot I try to establish balance by using the following techniques.

1. Working on a foot stand, I remove all flares that I see. I may do this over a couple shoeings to avoid weakening the wall. Be careful with your nail placement where you have removed a flare. Be safe if you are in doubt. Leave a nail out or replace it with a clip. Remember that a properly drawn and placed clip can be as strong as two nails.

2. Fit the shoe so that the

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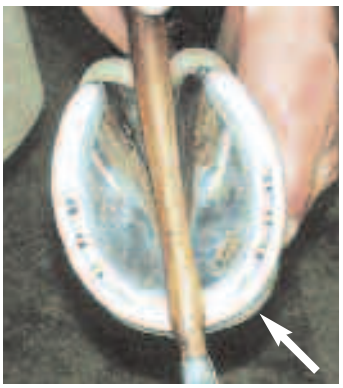


Top left: Frog marked in center, 3/8" back from point. Note the greater distance to Point B. **Bottom left:** Shoe is set wider than foot at Point A. Frog is now in center of shoe (equal distance from frog to Point A & B). **Below center:** Using hammer as visual aid for checking center. Arrow indicates flare that would normally be taken off before nailing shoe. **Below right:** Using rasps to check that heels of shoe are fit parallel to bulbs.

Balance

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

frog is centered in the shoe. In other words, measuring from the center of the frog you should have an equal distance to the outside of each branch. This is one of the critical factors in establishing balance. It may even require some punching or repunching of nail holes to get good nailing. Try marking the frog and measuring the distance until you feel comfortable with your visual check. I no longer mark the frog but use my hammer for a visual aid to determine if everything is centered.

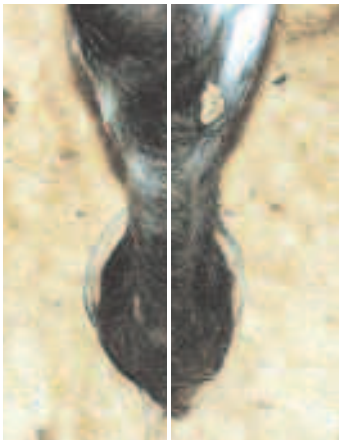
3. Fit the heels of the shoe parallel with the bulbs of the foot. You can use your rasp as a visual guide for checking the heels.

4. I always try to shape the shoe to match the shape of the coronary band. This may require boxing the branch if the heels are too narrow. Again, the punching of the shoe may need adjusted when you first begin the process of fitting to the coronary band. In time the foot will grow to the shape of the coronary band and nailing will be much simpler.

5. Be sure to check your fit from this perspective. Look down the leg from behind when it is in a loaded position (have someone pick up the opposite foot). The foot should be in the center of the limb.

These are some of the most basic principles of fitting shoes for balance. Putting your horses on a regular shoeing schedule makes this work even better. If you apply the good basic trimming advice and follow with these fitting ideas you should see your horses moving better and staying sound longer. The net result is you will have a happier customer base and less problems to deal with. ■

Below: Shoe fit to coronary, branch boxed. **Top right**: Shoe fit to coronary band. **Bottom right**: Looking from rear at line in center of cannon bone. Foot loaded, it is in center of leg.



Four Hit Hind Shoe

These photos show a simple one heat modification that can be used on a daily basis. All four blows take place on the horn. Remember to lock the shoe against the horn before each hit. This is an efficient way to turn generic or front patterns into a nice squared hind pattern with a minimum of effort. Notice that the shoe has been turned after the first hit and then again after the third hit. Your first two blows set the toe, the next two straighten the branches at the first two nail holes. ■

Left: Prepare for first hit, locking shoe against the horn. **Center:** Reverse shoe, notice blow coming straight down. **Above right:** Third hit straightens branch. **Far right:** Reverse shoe again to make final blow to straighten second branch.

The Tool Corner

TIPS FOR MORE EFFICIENT CREASING

BY **ROY BLOOM**

Is the shoe creased or fullered? I use the term crease if the bottom of the groove is sharp or V shaped. If the bottom is flat I consider it fullered. Call it what you want, there are two reasons to crease.

1. To allow access to the nails for easy removal.
2. To produce an area where dirt can collect and produce traction.

A creaser replaces the forepunch that is used for plain stamped shoes. The crease follows the same positioning pattern of the forepunched nail holes (figure 1). The first nail hole is generally in the middle of the stock if you are using 3/4" stock and gradually moves to the outside of center when it reaches the last nail hole.

There are many details to address when creasing. The inside angle of the crease is more upright than the outside angle. The width of this crease should match the nail you are creasing for (figure 2). Because of the difference in inside and outside angles and the fact that the crease runs to the outside of center, there is a significant amount of distortion to the branch.

If the creaser is simply driven into the steel there is no way to fix the distortion (figure 3). As the creaser is driven in, the outside angle pushes the material down and away with little resistance. The inside angle is steeper, it cuts down but meets resistance from more stock and pushes material up and in. If you run the hammer down the outside edge to push the distortion in you simply close up the crease.

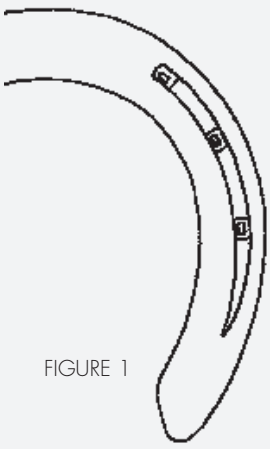


FIGURE 1

FIGURE 2

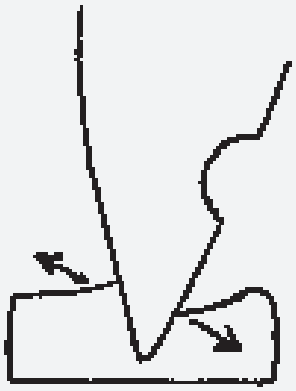


FIGURE 3

If you run the crease again you end up with the same distortion. You must first put extra material where the crease will be. This is called hemming or knocking up the branch. The edge is hammered at the opposite angle of the outside angle of the creaser (figure 4). The outside angle of your creaser is the angle the edge should be hammered. Angle it all the way across the edge of the branch.

After hemming you will be ready to crease. Before you start you need to look at your creaser. There should be no sharp edges on the creaser. Sharp edges cause coldshuts and cracking of the bottom of the crease. The creaser needs to flow when you are working it and sharp edges will cause the creaser to stick. Even the bottom edge of the creaser should have a slight radius (figure 5).

Once you've hemmed and made certain of your creaser edges you should be ready to crease. Starting from the heel or the toe, depending on the branch you start with, the creaser should be struck in the center of the head. Some have a tendency to lean the creaser away to be able to see better or to produce a straighter angle on the inside. If you do this you still need to make sure you strike the tool in the center. Striking the inside edge of the head will cause the inside edge to mushroom and even break. It can also cause the cutting edge of the tool to curl.

You can begin by making a marking run. You can then start the actual creasing. Once the creaser is struck, pick up the handle, pull and slide to the next position. Overlap

your positions, pulling the creaser until the center of the tool is over the end of the previous impression. Continue until the desired length is reached. The depth of the crease will be determined by the nail you will be using.

You should now run your hammer down the back edge of the branch. Then take a good flattening run down the foot surface of the branch. You can now make another run through the crease to clean it up.

Summary

1. Prepare your creaser before you begin (no sharp edges).
2. Do your hemming of the branch.
3. Make a quick run to mark your crease.
4. Crease.
5. Lightly hammer back edge.
6. Make flattening run.
7. Do your clean up run through the crease. ■

FIGURE 4

FIGURE 5

Sharpening the Undercut

In Volume 1, Issue 4 the use of the undercut was discussed. This photo shows the file stroke and angle used to sharpen the tool. A 6" flat file works well for touching up the tool. Sharpening should only require a few smooth strokes following the angle shown in the photo. ■

UPS "Rural Area" Delivery

In various parts of the country UPS has been slower delivering packages to areas considered "rural areas." If you are experiencing problems with slow delivery it is very likely not the fault of the supplier. You should phone UPS customer service at 800/742-5877 to voice your concerns if you believe your packages have been delayed for any reason. Packages marked RA may be later than normal because of UPS decisions - not because the supplier hasn't shipped in a timely fashion. ■

New Products

Hot Iron Productions, Inc. has recently released four videotapes. Roy Bloom and Dave Farley worked together to produce these tapes. The closeup camera shots give you an excellent view of the the work they are demonstrating. ■

Fundamentals of Forging
Volume 1
28 min. Establishing a foundation for your forging work

Volume 2
Basic Shoemaking
60 min. Step by step process of forging a shoe

Volume 3
Forge Welding Steel & Aluminum
30 min.

Basic Shoe Modifications
26 min. One heat modifications that you can use on a daily basis

Venturing into Cyberspace

WHILE ONLY A SCANT 7% of Americans had access to the much discussed Internet just two years ago, today estimates put that number at one in four. That number can only continue to increase as more and more American households - and businesses - go online.

Getting online is a somewhat simple process: all you need is a computer, a modem and a phone line, and you're ready to play.

However, getting the proper equipment is the easy part. The next step - choosing a "server," a company that provides you with access to the Net - can actually make the difference between a pleasant life online and one of frustration. The key is shopping around, say Internet gurus. Compare prices and talk to friends and family. While the cost is relatively low - you can get a good server for as little as $12 to $15 a month if you pay quarterly or annually - things other than cost can be of vital importance to headache-free service.

Is the server capable of handling all the customers it carries? If not, you're likely to spend more time listening to a busy signal than surfing cyberspace.

How much is the server's start-up fee, which involves loading software onto your computer? And will the company come to the rescue if you experience subsequent computer problems after they download their software?

Asking these questions of both the server and acquaintances already on the Internet can save you a great deal of time and frustration down the road.

And one last caution before you enter cyberspace - be wary of purchasing anything via the Net by using a credit card. Shopping on the Internet is becoming more common, but most businesses selling goods through their homepage generally list a phone number you can call to purchase goods the old fashioned way. We would recommend this route, as computer hackers have proven their ability to enter computer files with relative ease. You don't want your Visa number to become prey.

Look for more information on the Internet in future issues of The Angle! ■

The Natural Angle Now Online!

The Natural Angle now has a web site and can be found at http://www.naturalangle.com. Don't miss all of the exciting information available on this site! As always your input, questions and opinions are valuable - so don't hesitate to let us know what you think!