The Natural Angle
A PUBLICATION OF PRACTICAL IDEAS AND SOLUTIONS FOR FARRIERS
VOLUME 2: ISSUE 3

Maximizing the Slide of a Reining Horse

BY **DAVE FARLEY**

There are a number of variables that affect the performance of the reining horse. Breeding, conformation, mental attitude, footing, rider's skill level and shoeing all have an impact. The best bred reiners have a natural ability for good lateral movement and sliding stops. Their conformation includes strong hind quarters and straight hind limbs (viewed from front or hind), with powerful shoulders to enhance turning ability. As a rule, the farrier cannot control any of the variables except the shoeing.

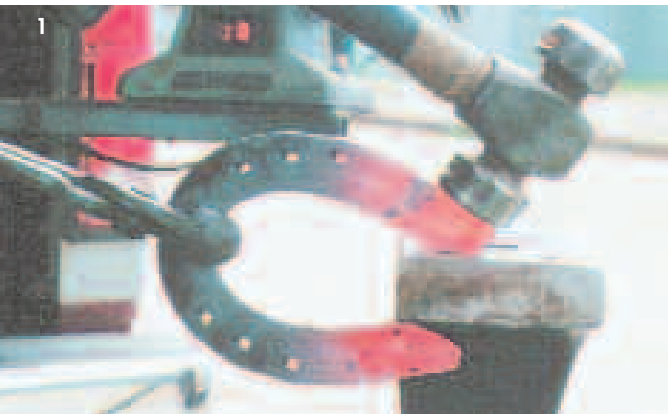
Foot prep is no different on the reiner than any other performance horse. Previous articles in *The Natural Angle* have stressed the importance of trimming the foot flat, placing a level shoe on the foot and providing good lateral support- putting the frog in the center of the shoe. The difference for the reiner is in the type and positioning of the shoe. I will warn you here, never trim the foot out of balance to change the direction of the slide.

To get the best results from the reining horse you need the slide to be straight, with the least amount of resistance possible. A horse with good conformation and a hoof that is straight should be shod with the toe and heels of the shoe in line with the direction of the foot. Watch the horse slide. If his hind feet are under him too far, lengthen the heels of the shoes. If he is not under himself enough, shorten the heels. I never turn the heels up as I believe this takes from the support needed for the slide.

The more difficult challenge comes when you have the horse that turns out, causing the slide to go outward. A horse that is sliding outward reduces the length of the slide and puts additional stress on the muscle

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

1. Check blank for length. **2.** Turn to desired position. **3.** Mark widest part of foot and toe nails. **4, 5, 6.** Punch shoes, putting more taper in toe nails.


1


8


9

Reining

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

structure. In clinics, I often ask everyone to think about snow skiing. If your skis are angled out, you will very quickly be stretched to an uncomfortable position and your ability to go forward is decreased. To continue forward you have to continually step back in under yourself. The same thing happens in the slide of the reiner.

I try to resolve this problem with shoe position rather than changing hoof balance. Do not lower the outside to change the direction of the slide. The "quarter turn" is the term used for this corrective shoe placement. Whenever you quarter turn a shoe you will find it necessary to either punch blanks or repunch shoes to line up to the white line and the widest part of the foot. The photos in this article illustrate the steps of punching, fitting and nailing the quarter turned shoe made from a blank.

Begin by selecting a blank length that you feel will work. Considering the evaluation of the hoof direction (done from behind the horse), position the shoe to get the directional alignment you need and mark the widest point and the toe nails. Using these reference points, center punch your marks (considering the white line) for nail placement. You will be punching the medial (inside) branch deeper. Punch and drift the shoes and when pritcheling, be sure to angle more at the toe and less as you go back to the heel nail.

You should hammer finish the heels to the approximate taper you need to allow the foot to clean (following lines of frog). This can be done before, during or after the punching. If I know the shoe needs to be opened, I often use the tongs as a spreader while I have heat in the toe.

Check your fit and make any adjustments necessary.

7. Hammer taper into heels. **8.** Tongs can be useful to open shoe. **9.** Check fit, note turn of shoe.


10


11


12

10. Note deeper position of inside nail holes.**11.** Position shoe in turned position with frog in center. **12.** After nailing and clinching rasp nail heads flush.

Once you are satisfied with the fit, use a belt sander or grinder to dress the heels, edges and put the desired roll on the toe. The footing will generally determine how much roll you need. If the footing is good, with a sandy top and a hard flat base, you need less roll. If the base is uneven and/or there is less sand on top you will need more roll to reduce the resistance. I always have some degree of roll on the toe.

You can now nail the finished shoe in the quarter turn position. Be sure you have placed the frog in the center of the shoe to provide the maximum medial/lateral support. The final step after clinching is to rasp the nail heads flush with the shoe.

The "quarter turn" should help the horse to slide straighter, enhancing performance and reducing the stress on muscles and joints. Using the position of the shoe to change direction will help avoid problems that trimming off balance can create. ■

13. Lateral view showing heel length (note missing wall). **14.** From rear you can see shoe is centered to limb.

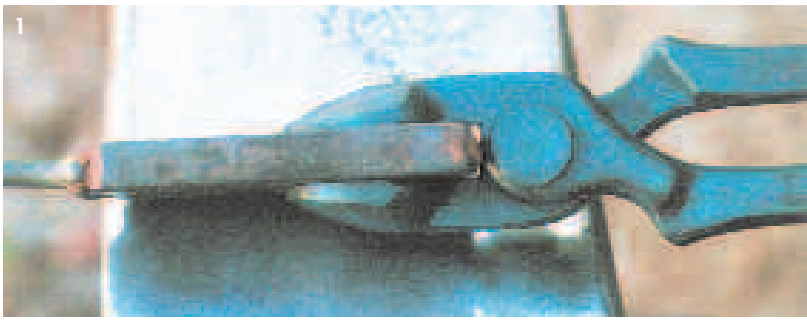
THE TOOL CORNER
Tong Maintenance

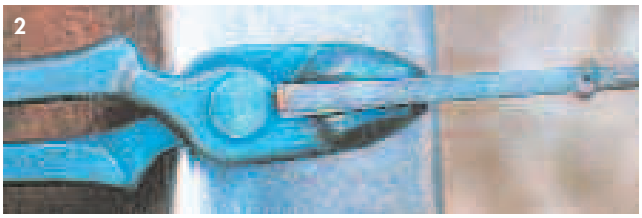
BY ROY BLOOM

Tongs are used to hold material too hot to hold with our hands. Maximum control is possible only if the tongs are set to the size of material being used. Photo **1** shows the jaws set correctly for the material. Compare this with photo **2 & 3.** Photo **2** shows the jaws too wide for the stock. Only the tips are touching. Photo **3** shows the jaws too narrow for the stock. The tips are gapped. Any gaps will allow the material to slip and make it extremely difficult to control.

If your tongs have either of these gap problems you need to reset the jaws. Place the tongs in the fire and heat the jaws. Place a piece of the desired stock size between the jaws. Place only the jaw area on the anvil and lightly tap the jaws against the stock as shown in photo **4**. When you have them making full contact set them aside and allow them to air cool. Don't quench them.

A helpful hint. In photo **5**, the pencil is pointing to a very critical area in any pair of tongs. If this area does not have adequate bulk it will bend too easily. This bending will occur in use from the heat absorbed from the hot material and even a slight squeezing of the reins. You will continually have to reset your tongs if they




2


3

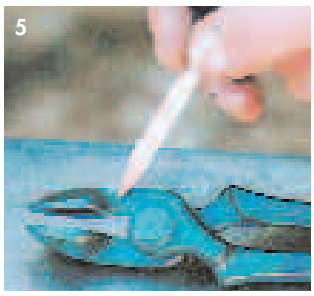
do not have enough material in this area.

Once your jaws are set you can address the reins. All tongs should be made from some form of spring steel. This adds a certain amount of memory to the reins and strength to the jaws. Without this memory or strength your jaws or reins can not hold the set you put on them.

The gap between the reins should allow a grip that matches your hammer handle grip. Photo **6** shows a good tong gap. If the dimension is too narrow, as in photo **7**, the rein ends meet before firm contact is made with the material. If the dimension is too wide (photo **8**) your hand is spread too far to effectively and easily grip the tongs. Either problem forces you to squeeze the reins to be able to hold your material. If this is occurring you need to set or fix the rein gap.

In photo **9** the pencil points to the area where you should bend the reins to adjust the gap. Don't just heat this area and squeeze the reins to set. Unless your heat is even, one side will move more than the other.


4

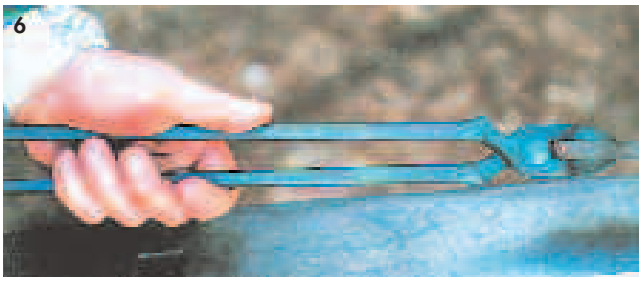

5

If your heat is too high you can distort the rivet.

To widen the reins, place a piece of 1/2" stock in the area shown in photo **9** and set the jaw to the dimension of the stock. If 1/2" is not enough, use a larger size until you get the rein gap you need.

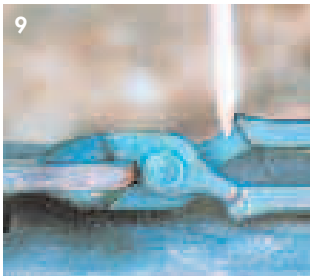
If the gap is too large put a piece of stock in the jaws and then place the tongs (Photo **10**) on the end of the anvil horn and tap just behind the shoulder of the reins. Switch from rein to rein as necessary to keep the reins even until you have the proper gap.

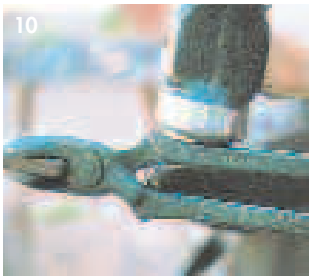
A final note. In addition to setting the proper gap of the jaws and the reins you have to consider the condition of your rivet. If your tongs start to bind, won't open or close freely or are extremely loose it's time to change the rivet. Heating the rivet and working the tongs or hammering the rivet will never fix it. It has become worn and needs to be replaced. ■


6


7


8


9


10

SHOE MODIFICATION

The Square Toe Offset Hind with Trailer

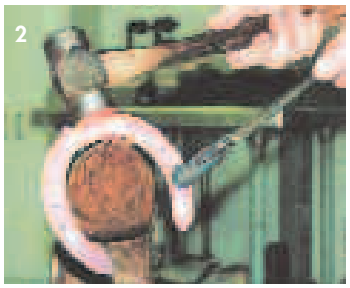
BY **DAVE FARLEY**

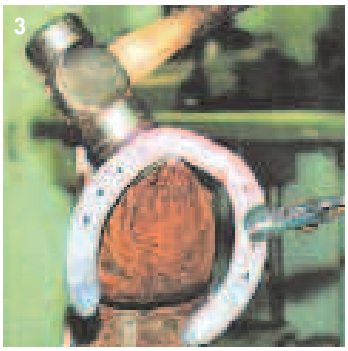
This is a modification that can be used on horses that are having interference problems such as crossfiring, scalping or overreaching.

Heat the entire shoe to a yellow heat. Using the end of the horn, place the shoe so that your first blow is just in front of the toe nail on one side. Then pull it toward you and strike approximately 1/2 inch in front of the other toe nail. This sets the square toe and has offset one branch to give you the length you need for your trailer. Finish making the hind shape with blows to the branches between the first and second nail holes. Take another heat, if necessary, and turn the trailer on your outside branch. The angle of the trailer should match a line running to the opposite toe.

Trailer- When used on horses that travel close behind, they tend to widen the swing phase of the stride and thus decrease the chance of interference.

Square Toe- As the foot starts to break over the square toe encourages the foot to break over the center of the toe. ■





1. Start with outside toe, establishing offset point and length.

2. Set inside corner. **3.** Blows to branches to establish hind shape. **4.** Trailer, done with round side of hammer. **5.** Finished shoe, notice offset position of nail holes. Also, trailer is in line with opposite toe.

THE NATURAL ANGLE is published to provide the farrier with new and useful information about the industry. It is published through a cooperative effort of Bellota Tools, Bloom Forge, FPD and Kerckhaert Shoes.

If you have questions, comments or ideas concerning the articles published in the Natural Angle, please contact your distributor. We welcome your input. The Natural Angle is designed and edited by Graphic Response, Inc. ■

Next Issue

ENHANCING BREAKOVER

MODIFICATION - ROCKER TOE

WELDING ALUMINUM