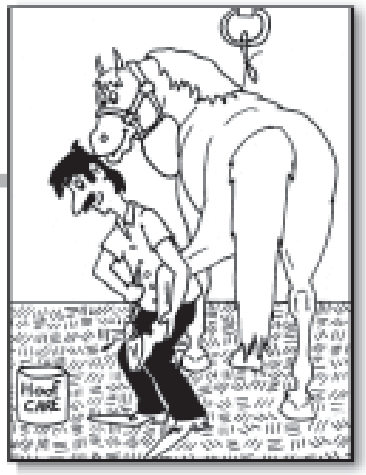
NO Hoof = NO Horse

By : Yehia Attallah



The purpose of shoeing a horse is to protect its feet from excessive wear. If the anatomy and principles of the physiology of the foot are understood and applied when dressing a foot and when making and fitting a shoe, then normal function will be preserved and many of the harmful effects of shoeing overcome. To this end the following should be practiced :

(i)The wall should be reduced to the proportions that would result from the friction of normal wear of the unshod foot.

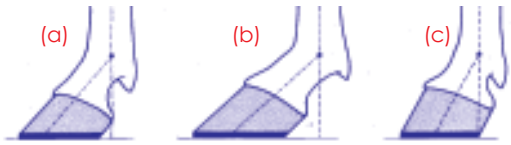
(ii)The outer edge of the shoe should conform with the outline of the wall. If the wall is rasped to make the foot fit the shoe the periople is destroyed, which makes the hoof brittle, bearing surface is lost, and less wall remains to secure the nails.

(v)The frog should not be trimmed. Unless it attains its normal size. It does not come into contact with the ground, and unless it is compressed when weight is taken, it cannot function properly.

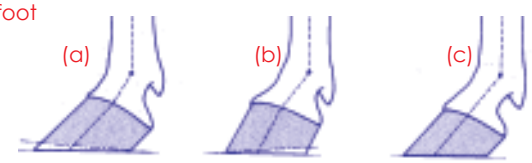
(vi)The shoe must have a level foot surface and rest on the wall, bars and outer edge of the sole.

(vii)The shoe should be secured with as few nails as possible because they dammage the horn. They should not be placed at the heels as this will limit normal expansion of the foot.

These, then, are the considerations which have to be taken into account to observe the rules of physiological shoeing. If these rules are not adhered to, the foot is unable to function normally and in time adverse changes will inevitably arise.



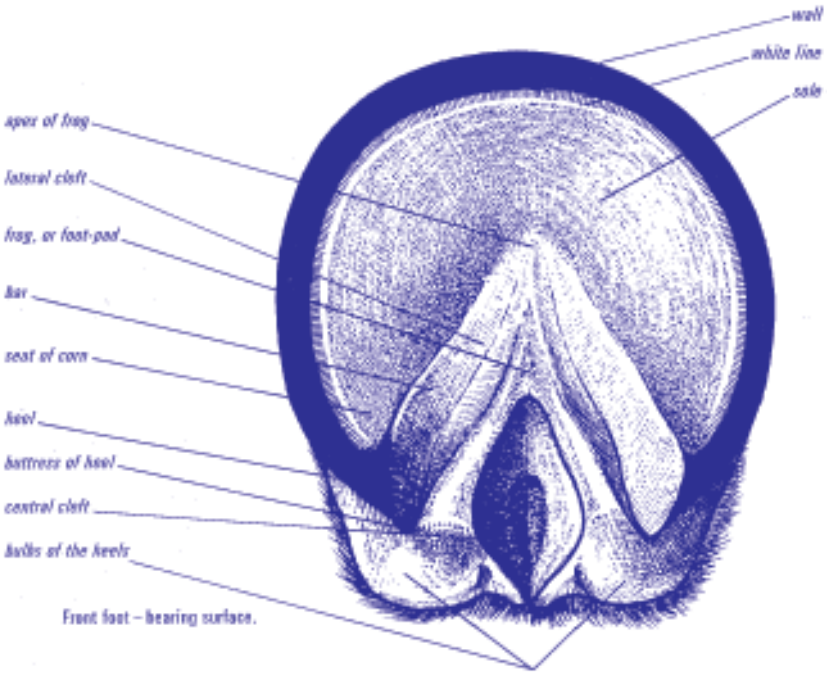
Side view of a normal pastern foot axis
(a)normal foot, (b)sloping or obliqur foot (c)upright foot



Side view of a foot with abnormal pastern foot axis due to : (a)excess growth of horn at the toe, pastern foot axis broken back. (b)excess growth of horn at the heels, pastern foot axis broken forward. (c)pastern foot axis restored to normal by either lowering the toe or the heels

Side view of the foot axis
The foot axis and the angle of the wall at the heels should coresspond and be between 45 & 50 degrees.

Moreover, for the feet to be kept in a healthy state they require to be picked out at least twice daily, morning and evening, and on each ocassion the horse returns from work. In addition, the shoes have to be removed every 4 to 6 weeks to balance the foot and maintain a normal pastern foot axis.



Stable hygiene is most important and care must be taken that horses in stalls do not stand with their hind feet in dung and urine which softens the horn and predisposes to thrush. It is not always appreciated that for feet to function normally the moisture content of the hoof must be maintained. And in that case **hoof conditioners** are recommended for their action is directly related to controlling the delicately balanced evaporation and absorbtion of moisture by the hoof and that in turn avoids the hoof becoming hard and dry, loosing its elasticity and easily cracking.

On the other hand, imprevious materials, such as **Tar and Oily Dressings** is applied at the frog and hoof pad delays the loss of moisture and in consequence prevent unnecessary softness.

Supplementary additives such as **Biotin** crumbles which is specially formulated to supply an adequate maintance level for horses. Biotin is a sulphur rich vitamin of the B group, produced by healthy intestinal bacteria, and which is active in the maintenance of hooves and skin.
Vitamin A is also important in development of healthy bones and hoofs and protein synthesis.