

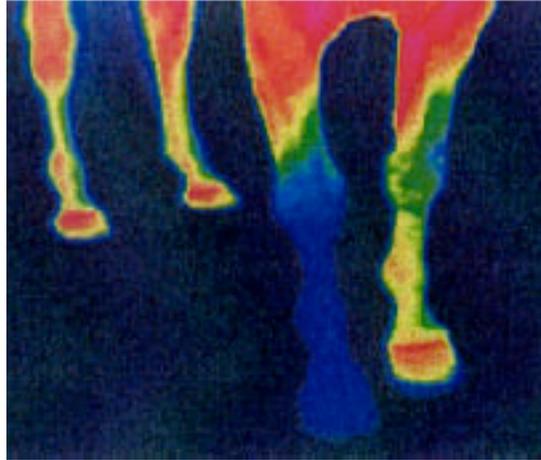
*Let's get started packet*



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# *Natural Hoof Care*

(a.k.a. Barefoot)



Thermo graphical image of horse with one right front shoe on. Shoeing decreases blood flow and vascular return as well as the cooling capacity. Note: differences in heat (and therefore blood flow)

## **So what ARE the advantages of a balanced naturally trimmed hoof?**

Greatly improved shock absorption

Faster growing hoof due to better stimulation - the faster it grows the quicker it heals!

Amazing traction on all surfaces

The quality of the entire hoof will improve

Stumbling or tripping may disappear

Increased circulation in the hooves and legs

Your horse is less likely to overreach or cause him/herself leg injuries

No more worrying about lost shoes and finding someone to put a new one on

Way cheaper than metal shoes

Less trips to the feed store

Can trim more often than every 6-8 weeks - help keeping horses in balance

Helps and/or prevents hoof problems (founder, navicular, chips, and cracks)

Horses Whole body is less stressed because of better blood flow and shock absorption

# *Diet*

Free choice grass hay, salt block, mineral block, and water. Spread out the hay so that they have to move to eat.

Diet and movement probably play the biggest part in Natural Hoof Care. As a wild horse travels, they eat a tuft of grass, then walk, eat a twig, then walk, eat a leaf, and so on. They are always moving and browsing 15-20 hours a day. This is our goal with our horses. Feeding free choice grass hay, salt block, and a mineral block are a few of the ways we can prevent major hoof problems that plague our domesticated horses. It is very rare that, founder, navicular, thrush, and other hoof problems are ever found in the wild horses. Prevention is our goal. Less trips to the feed store is the best! Most horses do not need supplements and grains.

Pasture is high in sugar levels and is not the best choice for all day living conditions. Turn out to pasture only between the hours of three a.m. to ten in the morning. This is when the sugar levels are not as high. Because of photosynthesis the sugar levels in the grass drop down by the roots when the sun goes down, and then rise during the day when the sun is shining. So, when most people get home from work about 5:00p.m. they are turning their horses out to pasture to eat “twinkies”.

One of the best ways to feed horses is to turn them out to the pasture around 6:00a.m. in the morning and put them back in their paddock paradise about 10:00a.m. Then, using a slow feeder, allow the horse to eat grass hay the remainder of the day.



# Slow Feeders

The best way I have found to help horses “browse” is by the use of slow feeders. These slow the horse down from feeding too fast and eating too much. This helps the horse not to colic too. Keeping food in front of the horse all the time (which is very natural) helps the digestive system keep in motion by providing feed at all times. It also aids in boredom. The horse can eat for awhile, walk around, eat again, play with its friends, eat again, take a nap, eat again, go for a ride, eat again. . . .

Use your imagination!!!! Almost anything you have already laying around can be used. I like the heavy field fencing that is 2x4 rectangles. But, this is something you need to experiment with and see what works for your horses.



Net is always open



Made Using a Barrel



Home made. Just drop the hay in and put field fencing on top.



This net fits a ton bale.



# Exercise

Natural Hoof Care is all about movement, which is very “Natural”. There is a way to exercise the horse without having to ride it constantly. This idea was formed by Jamie Jackson and is called “Paddock Paradise” it is a great way to care for a horse's hooves. Paddock Paradise provides movement that the horse needs so drastically to help keep the hooves strong and healthy. It provides a “Track” all the way around the outside edge of a pasture, paddock, or arena. The track can be anywhere from 10 feet wide to 40 feet wide, used as a loafing area. Rocks, logs, and pea gravel are put in the track to toughen the hooves and allow drainage of excess water. Hay piles are spread out in all corners so that the horses are required to move. Studies show that the average horse takes between 16,000 - 18,000 steps a day in a Paddock Paradise, 4,000 - 6,000 in a regular paddock, and only 800 steps a day in a stall. (Dr. Bowker clinic January 2007)

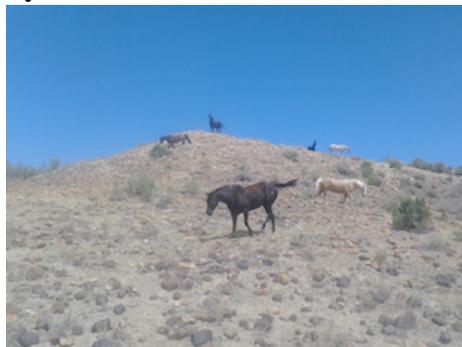
According to Dr. Thomas G. Teskey D.V.M. “Healthy horses can work over any terrain, if conditioned on that type of terrain.” Have the horses live in their riding condition.

Get the horses out of the mud! Haul in some material to give the hooves a dry out and hardening place. Hooves do need moisture- not manure. Water area down by water trough or have them drink out of a creek or pond. All the rest of the Paddock should be dry (All Year). Use your imagination!!!! Anything goes. If your horse is scared of mail boxes-add one. How about tarps? Railroad ties built up into a small hill? Keep it clean. Manure is one of a horse's worst enemies. Ride a lot!!!!

I built this for my personal horses when I lived in the city and had minimal ground for them to move around on. I was amazed by the changes in their feet. My horses circled the track all day long exercising themselves. Horses naturally want somewhere to go- you just need to supply it for them. I trimmed less off of their hooves every trim. This makes their feet that much stronger. I used electric fencing in the middle, it is inexpensive and very easy to install. I added pea gravel, cobble stone, one inch gravel, sand, and built a little forest of logs for them to cross over. Also, some logs they had to walk around. Of course, I spread out their feed so they had to move.



Our land in Roosevelt, Utah was the best so far for my horses. Our pasture was on the top of a hill and our water (in a creek) was down the hill 1/2 mile away over cobble stone, ravins, sage brush and desert. Yes-even cactus! So, they traveled one mile a day up and down hills just to get water. The horses paddock paradise was 35 acres of very dry land.



# Paddock Paradise

