

# Horsemanship

## Shoe for Rough Ground

*BY JENNIFER ZEHNDER • PHOTOS BY TED SHANKS*

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**These four tips will help ensure your horse remains steady and sound over rocky terrain.**

### **SHOE CLIPS**

Unfortunately, says Shanks, clips received a bad rap from veterinarians back in the 1980s. At that time, not all farriers understood the science of applying the devices, and the technique remains a fear factor for most. Shanks and Teves prefer a handmade clip with a thicker base to the thin clips included on most factory shoes. Handmade clips “get in” the hoof to a small degree, rather than resting outside the hoof. The farriers burn, rather than hammer, clips into the hoof, and prefer to use quarter clips, which are located in the vicinity of the first and second nail holes on a hoof. This strategic setting keeps the shoe from being driven back.



Shanks prefers to make his own clips, opting for a thicker, quarter clip

### **GOOD NAILS**

It's not always technique, but rather the location of the nail holes in a shoe that determine whether a nail “seats” well, Shanks says. Not only is finding a shoe that fits important for soundness, but so is finding one that has nail holes that meet a horse's individual contours. A shoe with a nail hole close to the outside edge of the hoof is counter-productive for a horse with a low-angle hoof or steep hoof walls, Shanks says. When in doubt, farriers should build a shoe and punch their own holes for a truly custom fit.



Back-punching is done from the hoof surface of a shoe to enlarge the nail holes. It is another method used to make sure nails seat properly.

### **PROPER FIT**

Ill-fitting shoes work against your horse in rough terrain, exposing him to shoe loss, hoof damage and lameness. Manufactured horseshoes are available in hundreds of styles, sizes and weights, and farriers can also forge their own should ready-made products fail to provide the proper fit. The key is to purchase or build shoes that remain well-fit weeks after the final nail has been clenched, Teves says. Beveling the rough edges on each shoe further reduces snags.



To achieve a perfect fit, Shanks shoes with a lot of support in the heel and then fills the remaining space with Equilox, a hoof repair adhesive

### **POUR-IN PADS**

Pads are the most common treatment for a tender- or sore-footed horse, and are also used to prevent soreness and injury. In rough country, however, traditional pads are not the wisest choice because they can make a horse slide more. Today's pour-in pads provide hassle-free, all-in-one protection for the hoof. Vettec's Sole-Guard and Equi-Pak CS are Shanks' and Teves' top choices. A thin layer of Sole-Guard provides additional sole protection without compromising traction, while Equi-Pak CS, a softer material, offers cushioned protection with the added bonus

of copper sulfate to deter bacteria growth. The latter product is also spongy enough to provide added traction in rocky conditions, Teves says. Both two-part mixtures are easily applied by anyone, anywhere.



Today's new pour-in pads provide excellent sole protection without compromising traction.

## Shoe for Rough Ground Part II

*This online article is continuation of an story in the October 2009 issue of Western Horseman.*

*Story by Jennifer Zehnder • Photography by Ted Shanks*

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Hawaii-based farrier Ted Shanks offers these tips for keeping your horse's hooves healthy on rough ground.

### **GLUE-ON SHOES**

When it comes to keeping horseshoes on in difficult riding conditions, such as rocky or muddy terrain, glue-on shoes are some of the most secure available, if applied correctly. Though a clean environment, such as on concrete, works best, these shoes can be applied

in less-than-perfect conditions. A farrier doesn't need to trim differently to accommodate a glue-on shoe, but he must make sure the hoof is clean around the heels and bars. Shanks uses an aluminum shoe with clips for the glue-on process, as steel shoes tend to oxidize quicker in a wet environment and release the glue. Excess product can be used to "clean up" the hoof wall at the heel where a shoe is vulnerable. Today's adhesives ensure glue-on shoes stay put eight to 10 weeks after application—longer than the typical horse requires. The increased longevity allows additional time for hoof growth, which is especially helpful for horses with rehabilitative needs.

This photo series shows how Hawaii-based farrier Ted Shanks applies a glue-on shoe.



When applying a shoe using an adhesive, Shanks typically uses an aluminum shoe with clips. He first prepares the shoe surface by cleaning it.



Glue can be applied to the hoof and followed by a clean shoe, or it can be applied directly to the shoe and applied to a clean, dry hoof.



Next, the shoe is carefully attached to the hoof.



The foot is wrapped in plastic wrap while the glue cures.



The finished product.

### **SOLE THICKENERS**

Sole thickening products won't necessarily increase sole depth, but when applied

regularly they will slow down the exfoliation process, and help preserve the sole. But beware of sole hardeners. They may sound like a good idea, but the sole of a horse's hoof was never meant to be rock hard, Shanks says.

"The sole is soft for a reason," Shanks says. "It requires movement to displace shock and stress and protect the hoof."

### **SOLE MATTERS**

The best way to keep a horse sound is to leave as much natural sole as you can.

"Where we live, trimming out thrush is an everyday deal," says Shanks, who lives in Hawaii. "After we started leaving more sole, we noticed we had less thrush, bruises, and tender-footed horses."

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