



# The PERFECT HOOF

## Club Newsletter

Official Newsletter Of Performance Hoof Care

### HOOF CRACKS: NOT A LAUGHING MATTER BY KC LA PIERRE, R.J.F., M.E.P., PH.D

**All Cracked Up:** If you have ever owned a horse that was prone to hoof cracks, you know how frustrating it can be. You are not alone. Nagging, persistent hoof cracks can be very frustrating for even the most experienced of farriers.

Hoof cracks can remain for months or even years, often managed but not cured. To the farrier, hoof cracks are more often a nuisance; that is until they cause lameness or interfere with the application of the shoe. In many cases hoof cracks are treated as cosmetic defects. What causes these cracks in the first place? I have found that loss of structure in the hoof due to *infection* is a leading cause of cracks and lameness in today's horse. Infection is not present in the healthy hoof, whether the evidence present itself in the form of a hoof crack, wall separation or seedy toe. Infections cause a breakdown of the very important inner hoof wall, the wall responsible for allowing correct distortion.

**Treatments:** What can we do to cure or better yet prevent infection and hoof cracks? With the understanding that environmental stimulus is responsible for the health of the equine foot, we can develop a treatment plan to cure any existing infection and cracks, or better still, a preventative strategy to prevent further infection.

First and foremost, use a hoof disinfectant to rid the foot of harmful bacteria. I highly recommend a product called Clean Trax. Clean Trax is a deep penetrating hoof cleanser that is often effective in one treatment. Follow up with a daily treatment of a non-necrotizing topical anti-bacterial solution. I recommend staying away from products

that contain formaldehyde, bleach or other necrotizing ingredients.

I promote going shoeless for the health of the equine foot, and for a foot with a crack due to infection, this is no exception. I, like many farriers, have tried patching, wiring, branding and relieving. There may be times when the foot has lost so much structure that the only course of action is to stabilize with some form of shoe, or patch. I believe this should always be the last course of action. A *balanced foot* that is exposed to the proper environmental stimulus for the return of healthy inner wall will be a foot that will not crack. What is the proper environmental stimulus you ask? *Exercise* that does not exceed the foot's capabilities. With an understanding that correct pressure is the stimulus for proper growth and that exercise is essential for the production of this stimulus, hand walks over firm smooth surfaces will do wonders for the horse with weak inner wall growth. Balance in the foot will allow for correct distortion to occur, thus providing the necessary pressure for correct growth. Often twenty minutes a day of hand walking for eight weeks will produce visibly healthy growth in the inner hoof wall. The dilemma that faces us all is that incorrect pressure applied to the weak structure caused by infection, will result in trauma.

**Next Month:**

PROVIDING A FORGIVING STIMULUS

**Welcome** to the Club, where my staff and I will be working very hard to bring you the latest information on hoof care. Whether your horse is shod or unshod this club is for you. This month we have included the first in our monthly DVD series, titled "Environment. This DVD will help you to better understand the importance of environment and its impact on the equine foot. Also included is a free audio CD of the lecture I presented at the Third Annual Hoof Care Summit, a \$15.00 value, our gift. In an effort to showcase products that we feel can *benefit your horse*, we will occasionally include information on new products. This month we have included an informative DVD from Dr. Dan Moore.

Also included this month

- ✓ A \$50 off Coupon our On-Line Program
- ✓ A 10% off Coupon for Hands-On Courses.

*Discounts are not retroactive.*

*Knowledge empowers the*

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## DOMESTICATION: A HARSHER ENVIRONMENT THAN YOU MAY THINK BY ROBYN LA PIERRE

Domestication has changed for the horse over the last several decades. Early on, stabling was considered a hotel for horses. Far more horses are now stabled outside in what has been called 24/7 turnout. However, what is most important to remember is that 24/7 turnout may be the *wrong* environment. It is still Domestication, and is this environment to be considered any more correct for the horse's hoof than stabling?



What about environment? How does environment relate to the hoof? Domestication has forced us to look at our environment and change our way of thinking. For the horse's foot, *domesticated natural turnout* may not be the answer, particularly if the environment is too wet. However, excessive stabling we know from research is not good either. Combating domestication begins by addressing the size of our turnout areas. Vast turnout requires larger numbers of horses. The increased number of horses will help keep the grass down, causing the horses to travel for grazing. Plus, the ground is likely to become barren in some areas, exposing the bare hoof to the rougher terrain needed for exfoliation. The additional wear will help to keep that exposed hoof balanced. If you do not have large areas for turnout, you will need to introduce more exercise to compensate for the lack of movement a smaller area promotes. Smaller turnout areas also promote muck and mud and they need to be addressed as

well. At the other end of the spectrum, another aspect of ground "environment" those rocks that you have been removing from your turnout; start bringing them back. They serve to accustom the bare hoof to the harsh type of environment you are likely to encounter on your rides. How easy would it be to expose that hoof to some round, small river stones by dumping some around the water trough? It not only keeps the mud

levels down in that wet area, but horses must frequent that area daily. How about laying an aisle of stone down where you know horses have to cross over, perhaps a gateway? The wear induced will keep the hoof in better balance, helping to return the hoof to a healthier state. Small-sized stones  $\frac{3}{4}$  to 1 inch in diameter could help to exfoliate excess horn

from what may appear to be a flat soled horse. The stone will also toughen up and increase sole in thickness. Think of it like a nice massage to the foot, applying pressures to adjoining structures. You will need to be sure that there is adequate depth to the stone; this help will prevent pin point pressure. A depth of about 4 to 6 inches works nicely.

So what if your environment is wet? Excessive moisture breaks down the bonds between inner and outer wall, causing cracking and separation. Moisture can also set the frog and sole up to fungal, spore, and bacterial infiltration leading to thrush and white line disease. This environmental factor in domestication is often the downfall to most hooves. Remedies may include topical treatments to help protect the foot, boots, stabling, and larger run-ins. All of the remedies mentioned are great, but by far, *exercise* is the strongest remedy. A hoof that is exercised regularly will be healthier and can combat an overly wet

environment. A horse that is given adequate water (and drinks it) can maintain a healthier moisture level to combat excessive water and mud as well. Dehydration can cause poor quality hoof growth. Mud can be a carrier of bacteria if mixed with manure and urine, but cleaner mud (if there is such a thing) will act as a drying agent to help dry out the feet naturally. Mud also applies pressure to frog and bars to stimulate growth in a positive way. However, I suggest that you do pick your horse's feet out regularly to remove manure.

In conclusion, we now know that Domestication is truly the harshest environment. In order to achieve true hoof health, we need to start viewing Domestication differently. What was once desirable is now known to be damaging. What was once a goal is now antiquated. True Whole Horse Hoof Health is achieved by looking at "total environment" and diagnosing the health of each of the hoof's structures and tying their level of health or lack of health to an environmental factor. If the factor is not present or is in excess within the present environment, you will need to make adjustments. Changing how you view domestication will better help you to create an environment within domestication that is healthier for the hoof and the horse.

About the Author: Robyn La Pierre, A.E.P. is Co-Founder and General Manager of the International Institute of Equine Podiatry. She holds a degree in Applied Equine Podiatry and a bachelor's degree in Business. Robyn teaches applied equine podiatry both in the USA and abroad. In November of 2005, Robyn released her first published work, a children's book titled "Shoeless, Not Clueless." It is a story about the wild horse, Regulus, she met on the Island of the Bahamas while doing some work there.

Visit her web site at [www.equinepodiatry.net](http://www.equinepodiatry.net).

## PUT YOUR HORSE'S BEST FOOT FORWARD BY KENNY HARLOW

As a horse owner, it is your responsibility to ensure that your horse will stand politely for your farrier/trimmer. The best tool a farrier/trimmer has is the key to his truck, he should know when to get in it and leave! If a horse is a problem, the farrier/trimmer should give the owner a card for a trainer and then head out. As an owner, you should make an effort to have the horse's feet clean so that your farrier/trimmer is not working in dirt. Set up a nice open area for your farrier/trimmer to work in so that he has room to move around and can stay safe. Another important job for the owner is to be on time for appointments. Your farrier/trimmer's time is just as valuable as yours; think how annoyed you get when you arrive on time for a doctor's appointment only to find that you have to sit in the waiting room 45 - 60 minutes. Don't wait for the farrier/trimmer to arrive before you go out to the pasture to try to catch your



horse... have him haltered and standing ready by the time your farrier/trimmer gets his tools from the truck, and gets his apron on. Be courteous to your farrier/trimmer. If you happen to have a horse that is a problem for the farrier/trimmer, you should work to fix the problems before your appointment. If you have a horse that won't stand still, put the horse to work. This teaches the horse to choose an easy option (standing still) over a more difficult option (moving off and having to do an exercise it would rather not do). When a horse I'm working with would rather not stand, I drive the horse in a small circle around me making the horse work. I teach the horse that if it wants to move that it's OK, but it will move on my terms, in the direction and at the pace I choose. After a couple of small circles, I give the horse the option to stand and I go back to what I was originally working on. If the horse moves off again, I repeat the exercise. The horse will eventually get tired of working in the small circles and will decide that it's much easier to stand and be polite. It's pretty simple to put a cue on your horse to pick up a foot. To teach the horse to politely lift its foot, I first ask the horse to just shift its weight off of the foot I'd like to pick up. I build on that until the horse picks the foot up off the ground. It's important that the horse not feel like you are taking his foot but rather that he is giving it to you. Gradually build on the amount of time that you hold the foot. If

you feel like the horse will get antsy and try to pull the foot away in 10 seconds, you put the foot down after 8 seconds. This is very important, as it is your choice when the horse gets to put its foot down. This will help build the horse's trust and confidence in its handler and make it more willing and pleasant to work around. When I get to the point that I can pick up all four feet, hold them like the farrier/trimmer, tap on them with my Leatherman, and use nippers I then think about teaching the horse to hold its foot on the hoof stand. I teach this the same way I taught the horse to pick up its feet. I place a foot on the hoof stand and gradually build the amount of time I ask the horse to hold its foot there. I get the horse to a point where it no longer minds having all four feet handled and held off the ground. Once we are at this point I have a happier horse and a much happier farrier/trimmer and we all stay safe. Lastly, don't be afraid of your trimmer. Ask him questions; he can be a wealth of information. Ask him what you can do to help make his job easier. If he feels that you are trying to work with him, he will be much more likely to spend extra time with you to get your horse though any rough spots. Remember, a good farrier/trimmer is hard to find, and even harder to keep... especially if you don't do your "homework" with your horse!

Visit : [www.kennyharlow.com](http://www.kennyharlow.com)

## NUTRI HEALTH "A RADICAL SOLUTION" BY DR. DAN MOORE

### Part One: Antioxidants

What can we do to tip the scale to the side of wellness? Use antioxidants! They are the scavengers of sickness, the buzzards that clean up all the messes in our bodies; the rustolium that prevents the rust in the first place, or better yet that which stops the rust dead in its tracks! The rust, or oxidation, is what turns the apple brown when you cut it in half. It is oxygen gone bad, free radicals bombarding everything it finds. Bottom line, if you want your animal friends to live longer and healthier lives, give antioxidants daily and take them yourself. It's already been proven that

antioxidants are beneficial. It has been since the 60's. Every day our animal friends, as well as ourselves, are bombarded with pollutants. We eat them. We drink them. We breathe them. Even horse feed (not to mention our food) has pesticides, herbicides, antibiotics, hormones, etc. in it! Water has chlorine, trihalomethanes, alum, lime, and potassium permanganates just to name a few! My goodness, just smell the air as you travel down the polluted highway. I believe you get my "drift"! If I only had one thing that I could do to help tip the scale to wellness, it would have to be to use the antioxidant and natural "antibiotic" Garlic. It is an awesome antioxidant, a tremendous source of sulfur for the body and a tremendous bug powder when mixed with the a few other ingredients. Sulfur is one of the most basic substances needed to rejuvenate tissue. Do you know that at one time, garlic was used successfully to prevent polio? It was also found to be a more potent antibiotic than penicillin, ampicillin, doxycyline, streptomycin, and cephalixin- some of the very same drugs used to treat Anthrax. It was even effective against some strains of E. coli, staph and other micro organisms. [Fitoterapia Vol 5, 1984] Other sulfur-bearing antioxidants, Alpha lipoic acid,

N-acetyl Cysteine, Taurine, and Vitamin C have been shown to elevate levels of Glutathione. This, too, is a potent antioxidant and also has been shown to counter the toxicity produced by antrax.[Molecular Medicine, November 1994; Immunopharmacology, January2000; Applied Environmental Microbiology, August 1979; Bill Sardi, Knowledge of Health]. And don't forget Grapeseed Extract, one of the most potent antioxidants known to man.

Well, I guess if you are still reading this, you are either ready to shoot me, you are saying, "yea", or maybe "boy, that guy is nuts!" Regardless, I ask you one more thing... if you are not familiar with homeopathy, I suggest you please check it out. It, in it's truest form, is the answer to our situation today. And yes, there are even remedies for symptoms of anthrax, smallpox, radiation exposure, plague, etc. Though there are new strains now, the symptoms these diseases produce are nothing new. They were here last century and often treated successfully with homeopathic remedies, even then. I for one won't be lining up for vaccination - but I will be doing everything I can to help my body help itself. The correctly chosen homeopathic remedy simply triggers the body to do just that - heal itself. But it goes without saying that all healing depends upon good nutrition. If the body doesn't have the nutrition it needs, it is like a car without the gas, it simply won't run. What do you say... Let's keep running! See you at the races! Hope this helps!

Visit Dr. Dan Moore's web site at:

[www.naturalhorsevet.com](http://www.naturalhorsevet.com)



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