

Building Heels Using Adhesives

BY EDGAR WATSON

In the last issue of the Natural Angle, Dave Farley did an article on the basics of gluing on shoes. I will repeat some of the important points of his article and expand on the use of products that are available for building heels. I have been using this technique with tremendous success on horses with under run heels, sensitive heels and lameness resulting from soft tissue problems. Like Dave, I use the same products to glue shoes on feet that have trashed up walls that will not

support the horse's weight and are difficult to nail.

The foot prep is the most important part of the job. You must have all the cracks and voids clean and dry. Do not cover any areas that may contain bacteria or are moist. You should first explore those areas to be sure it is safe to cover them with the material. Use your rasp or file to clean the wall all the way back to the heels.

It is possible to raise the angle of the hoof at the same time you glue the shoe. I always use shredded fiberglass mixed with Equilox to get the bulk it

takes to raise the angle. If the temperatures are 75 degrees or lower I use the fast set. You want to be able to get it on and have it set as quickly as possible. However, if the temperatures are above 75 degrees you may want to use the slow set to give yourself enough time to get the job done before it sets.

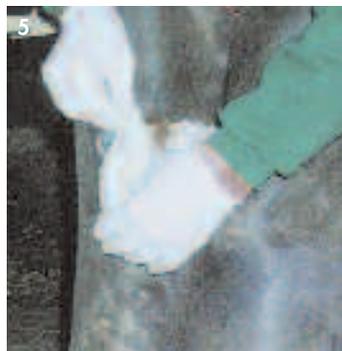
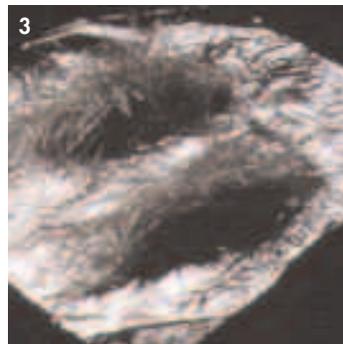
Start by cutting the fiberglass cloth in 4-inch pieces. Cut off the bias edges and it will pull apart easily. If you're doing both feet, divide the material into two equal piles. Set this aside.

Do your trim and shoe fit. Be sure to remove all weak hoof

and sole. I prefer to use aluminum shoes but I have used steel. I always use clipped shoes. Fit the shoe of your choice with 1/4" expansion at each heel. Before setting the foot on the ground use some type of sock or "booty" to keep the hoof clean. Clean the foot surface of the shoe by grinding with an angle grinder. Avoid contact with the foot surface of the shoe once you've cleaned it.

Get all your materials together and next to the horse. Get under the horse and then begin mixing the shredded

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This job was done on a seven-year old show hunter. The right front foot has an under run heel and I raised the angle about 3 degrees with the process. The left front was more upright but we decided to glue the shoe on it also. **Photo 1:** Notice the under-run heel on the right foot. The left has already been glued. **Photo 2:** Applying booty after finishing foot prep. **Photo 3:** I have my shredded fiberglass ready before getting under the horse. **Photo 4:** Mixing adhesive and fiberglass while under horse. **Photo 5:** Applying saturated strips. **Photo 6:** Forming equilox.

Building Heels

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fiberglass and Equilox. You'll put most of the adhesive in the heel area but you need to apply some material on the entire bearing surface. The material you build up the wall in the heel area will be critical to the strength of the job. Form the heel area to the height you are looking for. Place the shoe on the foot pressing firmly at the toe. Press the heel area down only as far as necessary to get the angle you are looking for. Some of the material will push out, use this to fill the expansion area. Cover the entire area with mylar and wrap with elasticon. When the glue feels hot, and the material feels like it has firmed up, you can put the foot down. Give the material about 15 minutes before doing your final cleanup with the rasp.

Don't expect dramatic improvement in the hoof condition to happen immediately. You may see immediate relief

for heel pain. You need to find a client that will work with you and stick with the technique for 6-7 months. You basically have to grow a new foot, which takes time. On performance horses I try to schedule resets on a 5-week schedule. On turnouts you may be able to go 7-8 weeks. When pulling the shoes on resets, work both heels up to loosen the shoe. Don't just rip the job off. Once you have the shoe off, clean everything back to good wall and you are ready to go again. ■

Photo 7: Mylar wrap allows me to continue to form material. **Photo 8:** Elasticon wrap before setting foot down. **Photo 9:** After material sets I trim excess from frog and sole area. **Photo 10:** Just before final rasping. **Photo 11:** Hoof elevated about 3 degrees.



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THE TOOL CORNER

Installation of Rubber Keepers



BY ROY BLOOM

I've found a rubber keeper will secure my tools better than the traditional metal keeper. It also absorbs more concussion and helps extend the life of the handle.

Photo 1: Items needed: a) Hammer; b) Handle; c) Tool Head; d) Needle Nose Vise Grip; e) 2" piece rubber inner tube. Obtain the smallest diameter tubing. The tube used here is 1 1/4". **Photo 2:** We only need to slide enough rubber onto the handle to cover the width of the tool head. **Photo 3:** Place the handle in a vise, slide the amount of rubber needed

and clamp with needle nose vise grip. **Photo 4:** Feed rubber through eye. **Photo 5:** Pull rubber tight and start tool head onto handle. **Photo 6:** Once tool head is started, release needle nose. **Photo 7:** Place head over hardy hole and drive handle into tool head. **Photo 8:** Trim off any excess rubber. **Photo 9:** Finished job, ready to go. ■

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Establishing Customer Policies

It is unlikely that you set customer policies and firm scheduling criteria when you began shoeing. Any work was welcome and uncomfortable conditions did not cause you great concern. However, as you established yourself and developed your skills you probably began to notice (and become more irritated with) less than ideal working conditions and customers. We have a few ideas for those of you in the early stages of your career and perhaps some of you who have “been around.”

Working conditions
Dave Farley has talked about 5 factors in working conditions and their importance to doing the best work possible. He explains to his customers that if any of the

conditions are less than desirable it will make his final job more uncertain. He has found that customers will try to improve conditions if you present it to them in this way.

1. Clean work area
2. Dry work area
3. Flat work area
4. Well lit work area
5. Well behaved horse

Attach 20% value to each requirement and let your customer know you can work up to 100% of your ability if all are met. If any are lacking, your final job may not be 100%. Be especially firm with the well-behaved horse category. It is a tough, risky job with a good horse. The dangers to your physical and financial well being are

magnified greatly by an unruly horse.

Payment

Cash flow is important in all businesses. You need to establish firm policies on payment. Our recommendation is payment on completion of work if this is possible. If you choose to bill, develop a habit of invoicing at least weekly, if not daily, and request payment in 10 days, 30 maximum. The shorter you can keep the payment period the stronger your cash flow will be. If you wait to do monthly statements your cash flow is strained, even if your clients pay promptly after receiving the statement.

If you choose to do work on account be firm with your terms, regardless what they are. Don't let your customers get in the habit of paying late. After all, you are running a business. You need to remember this in dealing with your suppliers. They have an even tighter margin and depend on your payments to keep inventory and service levels up.

Scheduling

If you can develop scheduling policies you will find you have much better control of your business and profitability. Stress the importance of regular hoof care. You might find a six week rotation to be ideal but be flexible with your

customers that are not professionals. If you can get them to agree to 7-8 weeks or less you will find this to be important. Efficient management of time is your benefit and the good condition of the hoof is your customer's.

- Set realistic schedules and allow enough time for the unexpected.
- Stick to your schedule and communicate with your customers if conflicts come up. Don't make a habit of changing your schedule. If you have customers that are willing to get on a schedule you owe it to them to do everything possible to be there - on time.
- Make sure your customers understand your requirements if they can't meet a scheduled appointment. Set a requirement for advance notice of any deviation from schedule.

The information you collect in a database will be useful in setting up schedules and implementing policies. It is also invaluable to your communications efforts. These policies enhance your service to your customers and increase your efficiency- the key to improving your profits. ■

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Business Strategy:

INFORMATION AND CUSTOMER SERVICE

AS A FOLLOW-UP TO LAST MONTH'S ARTICLE, we have provided a sample of forms that are complete with the necessary information for the farrier to fill in to set up a functional database of horse owners and their horses. These forms will help you set up an effective base of information and provide options for improving your customer service by allowing you to do mailing labels, form letters and other communication functions. ■

CUSTOMER INFORMATION

CUSTOMER _____
CUSTOMER TYPE OWNER____ TRAINER____ RIDER____
BILLING ADDRESS _____

BARN ADDRESS _____

PHONE HOME _____ BARN _____
 MOBILE _____
BILLING CASH____ ACCOUNT____
 CREDIT CARD _____
VETERINARIAN _____
 PHONE _____
COMMENTS _____

HORSE INFORMATION

HORSE _____
DISCIPLINE _____
BREED _____ AGE _____
LOCATION (BARN, ETC.) _____
OWNER _____
PHONE _____
TRAINER _____
PHONE _____
RIDER _____
PHONE _____
VETERINARIAN _____
PHONE _____
HISTORY/COMMENTS _____

