

The Natural Angle

A PUBLICATION OF PRACTICAL IDEAS AND SOLUTIONS FOR FARRIERS

VOLUME 5: ISSUE 2

Shaping for Symmetry

BY DAVE FARLEY

One of the constant struggles in shoeing horses is the effort to establish and maintain good hoof shape. It is not unusual to have a horse come to you that has been fit to the perimeter, a method many of us used to think was good horseshoeing. But as time goes on we often find

that we have problems when we shoe using this principle. You will often see a long toe as well as excessive flares. A hoof that has flares and dishes will often have flatter soles and uneven growth patterns. You can see this in the rings on the outside of the hoof. A well-balanced hoof has a good blood flow and will grow more evenly.

If you don't change this shape problem you will also have more difficulty shaping shoes and getting a good strong nail pattern.

There are a few ideas that I use when determining how to trim and fit, especially when faced with first time jobs. Volume 1, Issue 1 of *The Natural Angle* contained some of these basic ideas. In

this article I will be repeating many of the same ideas found there. I start with a couple thoughts in mind.

- a. front feet should be more symmetrical than hind feet
- b. hind feet have straighter toe quarters
- c. hoof wall thickness should be consistent from one side

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1. Looking at right hind to see if foot is centered to leg. Notice lateral toe. 2. Right hind again. 3. Partially trimmed, you can see the thickness of wall at toe quarters, particularly lateral toe. 4. Medial toe is blended now you can see the contrast even more on outside toe. 5. With both toe quarters blended the foot now has a more symmetrical shape and consistent wall thickness. 6. With foot on ground, you can see that the flares are greatly reduced.



7. This front foot has a considerable flare to the inside.

8. As we did with the hind foot, we are taking wall from the areas that have excess thickness and are out of symmetry. We do this before dressing the outside wall.

9. We've done all we want to in this first effort to establish better balance.

Feature

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to the other

d. flares are not supposed to be there

The photos in this article show feet that have been perimeter fit, resulting in an imbalance from my perspective. I try to trim and shape the foot so that the freshly trimmed frog is in the center of the hoof capsule. This is a goal but remember that you can't always do everything in the first shoeing. This often means there are flares that need to be removed. I generally start this with the foot up on the stand and rough it in when I remove the shoes. This gives me a good view of the shape of the coronary, which is also a very good guide for what the hoof shape should be.

With the foot in trimming position, I can now gauge the thickness of the wall and the balance from inside to outside- again using the frog as my center. I will even up



the wall thickness as much as possible now. This provides a guide for me when I take the foot forward again and work to remove more flare. You have to use some discretion in taking flares off. You don't want to take so much that the wall will be weak and you will have difficulty getting strong nails in place. Even in the toe area you should use caution. It's better to set the shoe back than to take all the horn away.

If you work to achieve more symmetry in the trim

you will find your horses come back to you in much better shape. You are encouraging good hoof growth as you develop your eye for trimming this way. You will find your work getting easier each shoeing. Shoe fit becomes much less of a struggle. In my work I have found that using front and hind pattern Kerckhaert shoes has fit with these shaping principles very nicely. It is apparent that Kerckhaert has put a lot of effort in developing the shapes of their shoes to match what the shape of a well-balanced foot should be.

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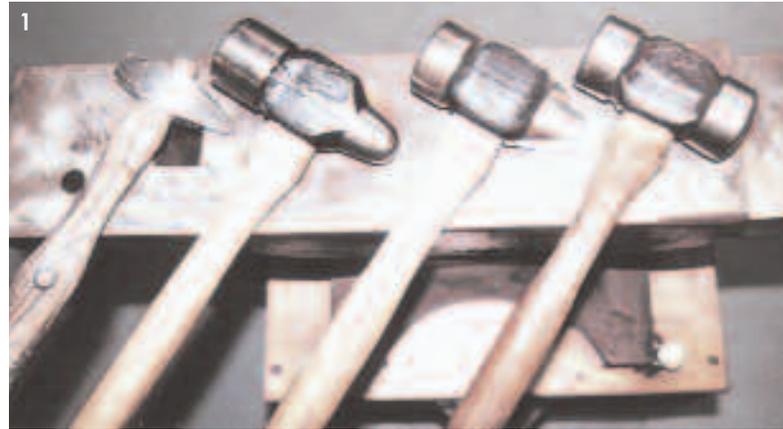
BY ROY BLOOM

Volume 3, Issue 1 of *The Natural Angle* featured a story on clipping shoes using the edge of the anvil. In the step by step discussion in that article we used a clipping hammer, which is similar to a ball pein. In this article, the photos show the clipping process with the clipping, rounding and cross pein hammers as well as a handled bob punch. As you can see from the photos, the three hammers are used in an identical manner. The starting of the bubble using the bob punch is different but the drawing of the clip is the same. The point of this article is to illustrate the fact that the clips you end up with can be very similar-making it a matter of personal preference as to which tool

you use to start your clips.

The hammers all require good control to produce a consistent bubble. The bob punch is somewhat easier to control but you have to be cautious not to drive the punch too deep as you may pierce the shoe. The bubble is not always as easy to draw but with practice it can provide a very consistent clip and may help avoid distortion to your crease and nail holes if your hammer control is not just right in the bubble step.

No matter how you start the bubble you need good hammer control when you are drawing the clips. Also keep in mind if you don't use the edges of your hammer or anvil you will end up with clips that look like toe caps. ■



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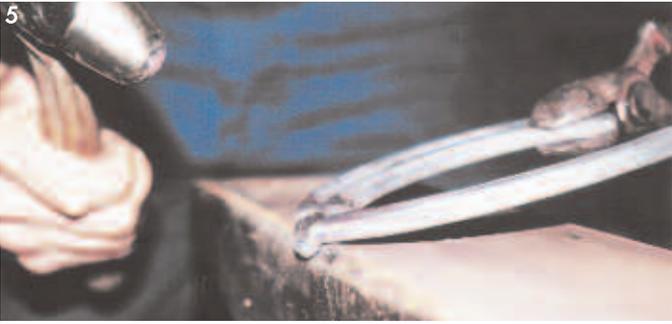


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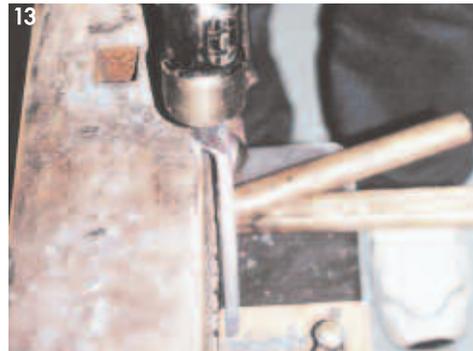
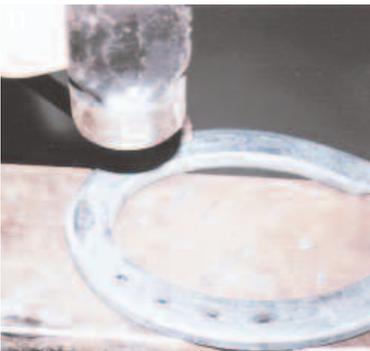


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1. Use the tool that works best for you. **2.** Establish a good balanced position for starting your clips using the various hammers. **3,4.** With each of the hammers, you want to drive the hammer at a 45 degree angle, directly at the edge of the anvil. **5,6,7.** No matter which hammer you choose, you have to have good control to establish a good start to the clip. **8.** The bob-punch requires a different starting method. Start first by setting the point of contact.



9, 10. You then slide to the edge of the hardy hole to finish producing the bubble. Be careful not to drive the punch too deep as it can easily pierce the shoe and leave a hole. As you can see the bubble is slightly different from the one produced by the hammers.

11. This is the bubble produced by the hammers, you should flatten the area behind the clip with the clip toward you and using the heel area of the hammer. This makes it much easier to see your work. **12, 13, 14.** I like to draw the clips working from the same end of the anvil. This gives me clearance for the tongs as I rotate the shoe during the drawing of the clip. In this case I am using the flat of the hammer and the edge of the anvil to draw the clip. **15.** Use the corners of the hardy hole to set your clip base.



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16, 17, 18, 19. You can see that you can get similar results no matter which tool you choose. The key to consistency is practice and hammer control. The method I use for the hammers, working from the end of the anvil, gives me a nicely balanced position where I can get good control of my hammer and the tongs. **20.** The goal is consistently strong clips no matter what method you use.



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