

Hot Fitting Can Be Helpful

The industry has debated hot/cold shoeing for years. It will probably continue for many more. We asked for some opinions on the issue. It seems that even those that are hot fitting don't believe it is absolutely a must- and don't hot fit everything. They feel the foot prep and the final shoe fit are the most important thing- not how you get to the shoe fit.

One thing seemed to be common in the discussion. A

good reason for shoeing hot is the fact that it is much easier to shape a hot shoe. But there were some other issues.

1. In fitting, the burn mark left on the shoe is a clear indicator as to where you are with the fit. You can know at a glance what adjustments you need to make. If you are doing much boxing or beveling of the heel area this burn mark also leaves you a clear mark to know how far to go with the bevel.

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1. Shoeing hot can have some advantages - notice the even burn across this shoe.

2. It's helpful to have a hot fitting tong, like this Bloom tong, to get even pressure.

3. You can see the burn mark on this shoe shows the exact fit you have



Hot Fit

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2. When using clips, the hot fit will allow you to better seat the clips without having to cut or rasp the wall as much. It may still be useful to notch out the base area so that you save some time in the seating of the clips.

3. A hot fit will generally result in better wall contact. If the hoof or the shoe have any spots that are not 100% level the hot fit will ensure that there is still solid contact.

There was also some feeling that hot fitting can help seal the white line area and is especially helpful for the wet foot. However, we don't know of any studies that have proven these points.

There are a couple things to remember when

you are hot fitting.

a. First of all leave some foot when you trim to allow for the hot fit, perhaps 1/8" extra. If you have taken the foot down too close and you then burn the shoe on you will very likely end up with a sore horse!

b. Don't take a shoe with a real bright color to the hoof. There are stories all around about flames shooting off the wall and even catching tails, beards and other things on fire with shoes that are too hot. A dull red is plenty of heat.

c. Always relieve the sole after the hot fit. You will



4. A closer look at the burn marks on the shoe.



see a small "burn" ridge on the sole area that can create a problem if you don't pare it.

d. Remember that any blows to reshape a shoe after the hot fit may cause you to lose the shoe to wall contact that you created. A final heat and trip to the foot just to ensure this good contact will be helpful.

not one of them said they believe you can't do a good job shoeing without hot fitting. Of course we also heard from many that the modifications that they use on a regular basis are not easily done cold- so having the forge is an absolute must- even if you don't hot fit. ■

In summary, the farriers we spoke with that hot fit have simply found it to be easier and give them better results with less effort. But

6. On this reset, you can see how the careful burn creates a good set for the clip.



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Customer Relations

Volume 4, Issue 1 contained an article that addressed some of the issues of customer service. The initial discussion related to developing a good background and method of assimilating information about your customers. If you don't have useful information about your customers it will make it difficult to put together the communications that help establish and maintain good relations. Be sure to review the ideas discussed in the previous article on customer service.

The idea of establishing the solid communications foundation was a part of the broader goal of educating your customers. This communication and education effort should lead to an improvement in your working conditions, the condition of the feet and relations with your customer. If you have helped educate your customer to the fundamental issues of good hoof care they should now be able to understand the importance of regularly scheduled maintenance.

As you consider scheduling, you need to think about the variables you will confront

1. Geographic spread of your customer base
 - a. Avoid a schedule that has you running from one end of your base to the other in the same day
 - b. Make sure you allow adequate time for the traffic conditions or other factors that affect your timing (lunch anyone?)
2. Number of horses
 - a. How many can you reasonably shoe in the time and days you set
 - b. How many horses does each customer have
3. Reasonable time frame - it may be that some customers need to be on a more frequent schedule than others are. Make sure you are fair in your evaluation of the needs- don't schedule them on five weeks if six is workable.
4. Customer's ability to be available on your proposed schedule - try to be flexible and understand the customer's needs. But once the schedule is set insist on meeting it or requiring advance notice of changes.

A good schedule has a number of benefits for you, your customer and the horse. First and foremost, the horse can be kept in more consistent condition, perhaps avoiding or at least detecting problems at an early stage. This is certainly a benefit to all involved.

For yourself, you will find that you have less uncertainty about your work, income and types of hoof problems you will run into. You should also be able to manage your inventory of shoeing supplies much easier. If you are keeping a good database on the horses and work, the schedule should help you plan purchases from your supplier. It may keep you from those last minute orders that can be difficult for your supplier and your nerves!

You need to establish firm, but fair policies regarding your scheduling. There will be unavoidable conflicts on both sides but if you have established good communications and relations you should be able to overcome these conflicts. Talk to other farriers that have developed a scheduling program and see what works and what doesn't in their experience. And don't forget the element of professionalism this gives your business.

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SOLE PROTECTION

ONE OF THE IDEAS we see in clinics and articles and in AFA certification is the need to be careful in paring the sole - taking only a minimal amount of sole. In many cases a good wire brushing will clean up the sole enough and no cutting may be necessary. Of course, any areas that look like they may be undermined or likely to be trapping bacteria should be investigated and pared as necessary.

Inevitably you come across thin-soled horses that can use some sole protection. You may even have a bruise in a foot that has good sole but is tender and causing the horse some soreness. In the past a pad was the first choice to treat these cases. The technology today has brought forward some products that can provide another option, particularly for cases where immediate help is needed but pulling the shoes and putting a pad on is not practical.

There is a product from Vettec that offers some good options. Equi-Pak is a clear cushion material that can be put on in a thin application or used to fill the cavity. In both cases the foot prep is the same. This can

be done before shoeing but can also be applied if the shoe is on the foot. The urethane material has an adhesive quality that allows it to bond to the sole if you have prepped the foot carefully.

a. You need to clean the sole area, removing all dirt and any loose or chalky sole. This can be done with the knife and a wirebrush.

b. Make certain you have no areas of seepage or trapped debris in the sole or the frog (including thrush!) If you have an area that appears to be seeping or damp do not cover it.

c. Using a small wire brush (toothbrush size), apply a small amount of denatured alcohol and brush the sole and frog thoroughly. Make certain that the foot has ample time to dry - use a heat gun or hair dryer if necessary.

The foot is now ready for the material. If you are going to set the



Equi-pak has been applied - notice it is clear, actually making it difficult to see in this photo.

foot down, be certain you have a clean dry surface to put the foot on. You can also put some type of "sock" on the hoof if you have one. At this stage you don't want to get the sole dirty or damp again.

Insert the cartridge (label up) and holding the hoof as level as possible, begin the application. If you have to stop for any reason, remember the material in the tip may set so it's a good idea to have extra tips close at hand. Apply the amount of material you want and wait approximately 60 seconds before setting the foot on the ground. It's that simple. It can be very helpful to have someone help you with the application step as it is often difficult to get the hoof level and do the application by yourself.

Vettec now makes a mesh material that can be applied with the shoe and will give you additional help in making sure the product stays in the foot. Be sure to allow the



180cc cartridge and gun

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SOLE PROTECTION

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material to flow through the mesh and fill the cavity. Don't run a light bead across first - it may set prematurely and keep the material from completely filling the cavity.

Dan Haussman, a farrier from Illinois, came up with a very handy method of applying both Equi-Pak and Equi-Build. He uses a 1/4" foam board that is available in most home centers. He cuts the board to squares or rectangles that will cover the bottom of the hoof. He then applies a double-sided carpet tape to the foam. He keeps these in his truck until he has a job that needs the product. He does the hoof prep and then puts the board on the bottom of the foot (with the shoe on) and sets the foot down so it makes even contact with the shoe. Otherwise the nail heads may hold the board up and you

will have material escape. If the area at the back of the hoof is too tight to insert the tip you can drill or punch a small hole the size of the tip in the center of the board before putting it on the foot.

Now with the foot up, apply the material from the back of the hoof or in the hole you have. If you are concerned with the flow out the heel area you can simply build a dam with duct tape. The material that does seep out is easily trimmed after it sets. With this foam board method you can set the foot down almost immediately. This helps give some concavity to the material and keeps it from being flush with the ground surface of the shoe or worse, having it create too much pressure. If you hold the hoof up with this board in place your material will end up flush with the ground surface of the shoe. ■



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