

The saying 'no foot, no horse' is key to understanding the essential need for regular good quality hoof care. It is important to make sure that you work with a farrier that is properly qualified and registered with the Farriers Registration Council.

Over time your farrier will build up a relationship with your horse, and they will come to know your horse's podiatry requirements. Vets and farriers have good working relationships and frequently work together to resolve hoof care issues.

**Abscess** - also known as pus in the foot! This is one of the most common causes of lameness amongst horses. The lameness is usually confined to one leg and clinical signs will occur suddenly, often with the horse appearing sound one day and then becoming very lame the next day. The severity of the lameness is determined by the amount of pus produced and whether it has a means of escape. If there is no drainage then the pus builds up between the sensitive layers of the hoof and the hard hoof wall. As the hard hoof wall cannot expand this results in inflammation, which is really painful for the horse. Once released by a farrier or vet, a poultice is applied until drainage has stopped.



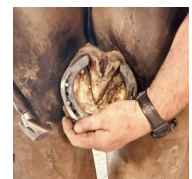
**Bruised Sole** - The sole of the hoof is the insensitive protective undersurface bordered by the white line and the frog. Solar bruises can be caused by your horse standing on a stone, excessive hard work on hard ground - especially if your horse is unshod or in ill fitting shoes. Picking out your horses feet regularly, particularly before exercise is recommended to prevent unnecessary bruising.

**Thrush** - Thrush is a condition affecting the frog region of the foot. Affected areas are usually soft and foul smelling. Thrush can develop as a result of poor hoof hygiene, failure to clean out the feet regularly or if the horse is kept in damp and dirty conditions. If the hoof is continually damp and dirty it allows bacteria to invade, causing infection. Although thrush can cause lameness, it is not commonly associated with the condition.



## HOOF CARE TOP TIPS

⇒ **Farrier** - Ensure you have a registered farrier in place to attend your horses feet every 6-8 weeks. This will ensure that the hooves do not become overgrown, leading to cracks, ill fitting shoes or lameness. The farrier is also the key person to spot anything untoward developing such as thrush, ensuring that appropriate guidance and treatment can be provided.



⇒ **Pick out the hooves** - Picking out horses' hooves is essential for their health and well-being. It helps to prevent lameness, infection, and discomfort by removing dirt, mud, manure, and stones that accumulate in the hooves. Regular hoof care reduces the risk of hoof bacteria infection and debris-induced bruising. By following a daily hoof care routine, horse owners can ensure their horses feet remain healthy and comfortable.



⇒ **Diet** - Ensure your horse has a balanced diet and that it contains the appropriate vitamins and minerals to support healthy hoof growth.

