

Trimming Methods??? Who's who?

There is an old timer cowboy saying I heard over and over growing up in the Canadian prairies...It was if the horse is showing lameness.... pull the shoes...put him out in the (big)pasture and let him straighten it out on his own. "If he's going to get better...he'll do it there!" (They knew this...even though it was custom to bring a horse in (the barn) for training and put shoes on him...most likely as a 2 year old.)

There is nothing new to barefoot horses or the knowledge of the healing powers of Mother Nature.....it has been around for 'ever'.

Today, there is a big shift towards more natural ways in many things...horses included. I think a lot of the trimming methods out there today (and more are surfacing each day) are selling people the idea of a performance barefoot horse...**and this is a good thing!** It's about time that this thought is becoming more mainstream!! It just makes sense to so many people. Appreciate the information age we live in, the internet and word of mouth through stories of real people.

The most important aspect of all these 'methods' is that they are getting a message out that barefoot is 'good'! Take those steel shoes off and get the horses out of the barn/stalls... moving more and eating less concentrates and processed feeds ..etc.

There are as many methods of trimming a horse as there are peoples hands using the tools to do it...despite who's trim one tries to emulate. No one rides 'exactly' the same...and no one trims 'exactly' the same. Trimming a foot is much like an art...and no two artists paint the exact same 'tree', no matter who their teacher is. The good news is that the horses foot is extremely adaptable and very dynamic in properties.

The horses' foot is very pliable...it responds to the slightest change made to it by tools or environment. If the changes made are in the direction of positive (aka natural)...then this is positive for the entire horse. If the change is away from natural (away from the horses innate nature)...this adaptation can only happen to a point...the weakest point for that individual which is where their system will crash. System crash is seen in many different ways...from Founder/laminitis, navicular, thrush, aggression, training problems, 'mystery' lameness, hock and back issues, 'heel pain'....and the list goes on and on.

For me...I am slightly troubled with some methods who sell the thought of 'both' shoes and barefoot. To me...it shows that they are not fully understanding or accepting (or promoting) the horse and his foot **or** the requirements necessary for recovery or a conditioned barefoot...or they are just marketing their 'ideas'. There is obviously a market for this logic as there are *many different people in many different places* on the whole barefoot vs. conventional /shoes thing. Some people are not ready to believe that horseshoes are equivalent to the foot bonding It does show that they are looking at the barefoot horse as relevant and attainable...but out of reach (or not practical) for most so they offer shoeing with a catchy 'natural' name attached to it. The marketing obviously works....but I hope someday there will be more agreement on the barefoot and natural issue...and that the horse shoe will finally be exposed for the inhumane foot bonding device that it is and then abolished once and for all.

So for me, despite all the different barefoot methods out there, I vote for those who also endorse NO shoes and a much more natural lifestyle. I have seen horses pull through amazing injuries and recover from horrid lameness'. I am always amazed and in awe of the power of nature...give it a chance.

by Lisa Huhn D.Eq.Sc.