



Trimming the foundered horse

Every foundered horse has to be trimmed according to his individual circumstances. Without doubt the goal is to bring the coffin bone back to a ground parallel position. Bringing the hairline in a more sloping position and as far as possible to 30° helps to achieve anterior-posterior balance. At the same time you need to remember to leave enough heel height to keep the horse comfortably landing on his heel and as much hoof capsule as possible.

In this particular case on the right the horse was brought to the hoof clinic with a diagnosis of founder and Epona (plastic) shoes. He was not visibly lame. (Picture on top)

Hind feet had been trimmed four weeks prior to his arrival at the clinic, he was on his second round of homeopathic, individualized detox with the Meridian Stress Assessment System (MSAS).

Front shoes were removed upon arrival and the heels were lowered somewhat. (Picture middle) He was turned out with the herd and moved well.

Three days later (picture bottom) the picture was taken **before** trimming again. The hoof had settled into a more correct form.



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[Pictures in this lecture: HoofCareUnLtd., Mandy Etherton and unknown sources]



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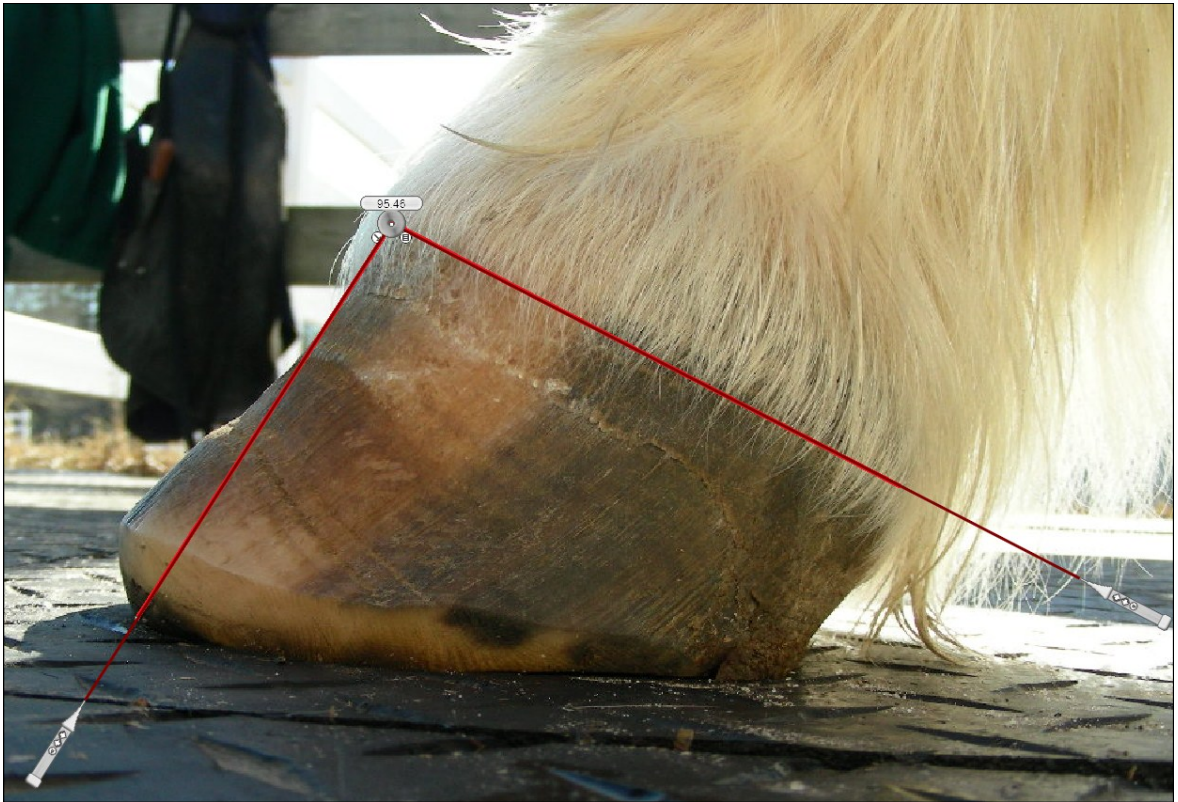
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The breakover was 10 degrees less (front hoof), but looks still correct for this hoof.



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Pictures of a horse not in our care. Horse has been foundered for quite a while and coffin bone has remodeled to create a new ground parallel situation. Heel would need to be lowered (the two pictures on top are not from the same time frame, the radiograph is a year older than the hoof picture, but the problems with the bone remain the same). There is already a lot of coffin bone destruction, so a limited rehabilitation prognosis would be advised.

In addition to the founder (anterior-posterior imbalance), the horse has on the same hoof a medio-lateral imbalance that needs to be addressed at the same time, but very carefully, as there is joint adaptation involved. Lowering the medial wall (radiograph has been flipped horizontally to mimic picture) could bring the hoof inside the vertical.



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Above and directly below: Trim on slightly rotated horse 6 months apart.
Backing the toe up every two weeks yielded a better toe height. He also has a better horn quality.



A high scoop like this does nothing to relieve the “bulge” in the hairline. It does do two things: It takes away toe height and it destabilizes the hoof capsule.





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A rather dramatic case presented here by Mandy Etherton, a graduate from Victoria, Australia.

This hoof was definitely rotated, but maybe not separated, just overgrown. In such a case you cannot help but rasping through the white line.

The after pictures show a rather good approximation to the guidelines on a very upright pony hoof.





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Here you have a very shallow profile of a foot. This not only tells you about rotation and separation, but also about coffin bone destruction. It is very questionable how sound this horse may become under your expert care. Definitely a high maintenance case where you have to be very careful with trimming so that you hopefully get some attachment again. Frequent correction of the breakover point is indicated, booting may be helpful to avoid further abrasion of the toe and facilitate movement.





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This is a hoof where you need to have radiographs before trimming. As you can see in the dissection, there is much deformation of the coffin bone, and no hope for re-attachment.

This is a case where you must say "no" to further trimming. Radiographs will help you to say "no".





Morgan mare with 10 degrees rotation. Re-shaping of hoof capsule within 10 month completed. She came to the hoof clinic with shoes removed. Heels were taken down to 3cms in first trim. Horse was trimmed at least every two weeks and walked a lot. Breakover was adjusted every time. She was also diagnosed with Cushing's syndrome, after rehabilitation her blood values were normal again.



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Rio-he was foundered for years. As you can see we gained some toe height over the time he was with us. But the radiograph on the bottom (which was taken towards the end) shows an enormous destruction of the coffin bone and no hope for re-attachment. When he let us know that he was ready, he was humanely euthanized. This horse had shoes on as a yearling in order to be shown in halter classes.



Again, radiographs are really important on very shallow hoof capsules. Also very important is the vitality of the horse and his will to live. **Every case has to be evaluated individually.**