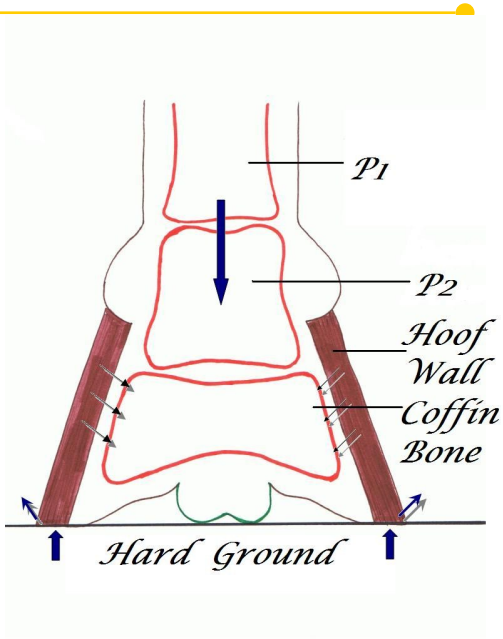
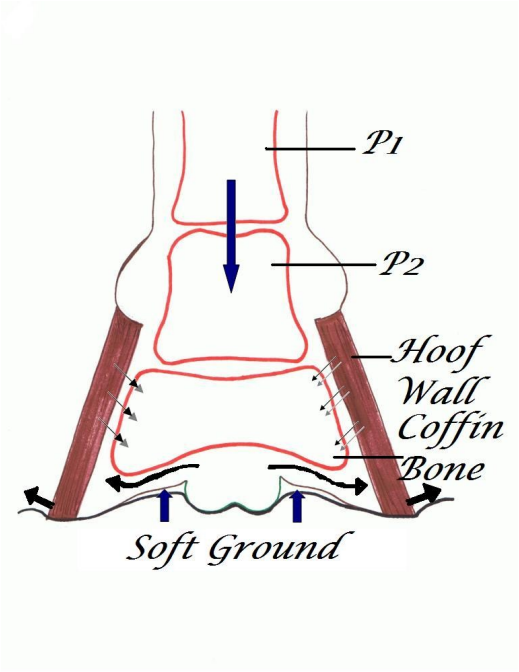
With all corrections you need to consider strongly the terrain the horse is living on. It is not the terrain he gets exercised on, but the terrain he is actually living on. Only when the horse lives on the appropriate terrain, will you get satisfactory results.



On hard ground you can expect satisfactory de-contraction results as the hoof gets stimulated correctly and circulation is ensured with every step. Hard ground does however pose a problem when the hoof is inflamed and painful. Then the horse may not want to move enough on hard ground.

The hoof also wears differently on hard ground. As the hard terrain abrades the hoof wall more, it wears faster and you need to take that into consideration.



On soft ground the ground fills into the solar concavity and you do not get as much stimulation as you get on hard ground. When the ground is so soft that hoof mechanism does exist only marginally, the lamellae do not produce enough hoof horn and the horn is of inferior quality. Corrections on very soft terrain may become impossible.

Equines with very hard hooves (donkeys, zebras, Arabians, Quarterhorses, Andalusians etc.) need even firmer terrain than horses with "softer" hooves (Warmbloods, Draft horses etc.) This is especially true for foals growing up on this terrain.

While rubber is an ideal rehabilitation surface as it is hard, but non-concussive, the horses have really to live on the rubber surface until correction is achieved.

Unsuitable terrain

Unsuitable terrain is a major cause for contraction. Hard hoofed horses living on soft ground will not receive the necessary mechanical forces on weight-bearing to cause the hoof to expand. Insufficient movement adds to the unfavorable situation.

Contraction results from insufficient hoof mechanism and insufficient wear. Especially affected by soft ground are hard-hoofed foals (Quarter horses, Arabians, Andalusians, donkeys etc.) since the soft ground provides insufficient resistance to activate hoof mechanism in the first place. Softer hoofed horses (Warmbloods, Friesians, draft horses) are usually not quite as affected by this. A foal living on proper terrain for his breed expands the hoof in the sole and heel region and at faster speeds in the quarters. As the hoof expands on the coronet, it also will expand on the sole level and therefore will always retain its conical shape. When soft ground does not force this expansion, the coronet will continue to grow wider as the foal develops and matures. The sole level remains narrow and the result is a reverse cone shape of the hoof.

Pea gravel

Horses seem to love this kind of terrain. Prof. Dr. Bowker has conducted various studies with Ultrasound. He found that horses standing in pea gravel have a slower blood flow through the hoof, which results in more thorough penetration of all tissues. This is not only comfortable to the horse, but also provides better healing.