



Sheared Heels

In hooves with sheared heels one heel is higher than the other





Cross section of a sheared heel, showing how the shear pushes the internal structures out of their correct alignment

The lateral cartilage is fairly normal on the right side of the picture (white), while it is pushed up on the left side of the picture.

You can see how uneven the deep flexor tendon is (yellow) and even the frog is pushed out of alignment.





A sheared heel also comes usually in connection with other contractions

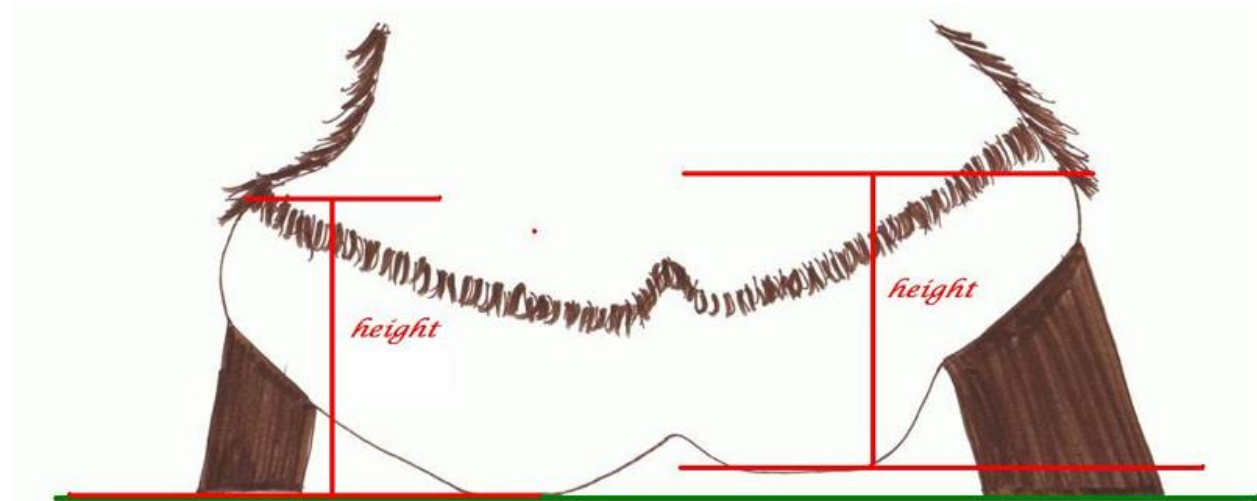




Trimming for Sheared Heels

In a hoof with a sheared heel the quarters and heel are higher on one side. To bring this hoof into balance, you have to trim both sides to the same height. You may not be able to do this all at once, but have to trim the heel and the wall down in increments. If you take too much wall and heel at one time, you may unbalance the hoof and the bone column before they have time to adjust.

If only the wall is sheared and the frog is still level, leave the frog to bear weight.



Careful if the high wall is already on the vertical, shortening it may bring it beyond (inside) the vertical. * You also may not be able to shorten the sheared heel side as much as you need to all at once as you may run into corium. (Remember to ALWAYS trim the high side of the hoof first!)

After you assess this situation, tell the owner what they can expect in terms of rehabilitation. It may take a long time if contraction beyond the vertical and other imbalances exist in that hoof. You may also be able to leave the diagonal toe higher in order to establish a lever that helps to bring the sheared heel down.

* The sheared heel contraction is often combined with a ULCBV. If this is the case, you need to leave the sheared heel unaddressed at first and move the wall outside the vertical with judicious trimming. Once you have a diverging hoof wall again, then you can trim the sheared heel without running into further problems.

