Hoof Deformity and Bone Deformation

Limits and Adaptation

Consider these points before beginning to attempt to alter hoof form:
What shape abnormalities, imbalances and incorrect angles of divergence exist in hoof form prior to your first trim?
What are the potential bone abnormalities that may interfere with your results?
To what extent has bone been lost? This should be verified in x-ray.
How may these bone abnormalities affect the movement of the horse now and in the future? What are the expectations of the owner and horse considering the bone deformity?
Is there any question of insufficient bone area to yield adequate reconnection?
Is there any question of inadequate suspension of P3?

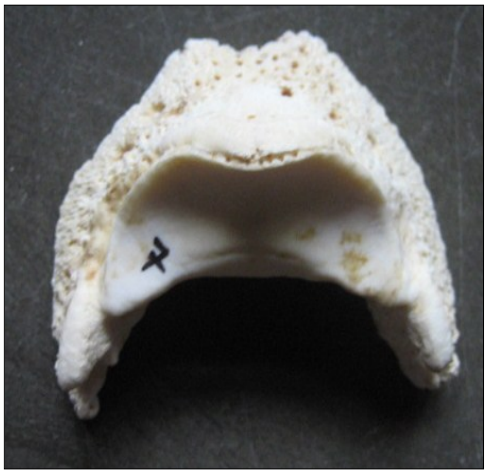
P3 of a newly born foal

UNO ALLA VOLTA — ONE AT A TIME

Healthy State

“Why do I always have to rebalance that foot?”

If at all possible, it will take a long time for bone to be added and to allow for a “normal” hoof form. By always rebalancing the hoof, you may eventually be able to create a better hoof capsule.



Contraction Beyond the Vertical

U N O A L L A V O L T A — O N E A T A T I M E

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Excessive Divergence

Bone loss at toe

Suspension

When viewing x-rays, always take into account the relationship between the outer shape of the hoof capsule and P3. In a healthy foot, the top of the extensor process of P3 should be in line with the top of the hoof capsule. The hoof capsule contour should be the same as P3. If P3 has moved down into the hoof capsule, recovery time is extended significantly to yield a stable re-suspension.

Side Bone—The Ossification of the Lateral Cartilage

Excessive Bone Loss

Ossifications

Ossifications in Navicular Bone and Sesamoids

Ossifications

Depending on the location, some ossifications are also known as high or low ringbone.
A hoof left unbalanced over a long time will inevitably create a lot of stress on the ligaments which connect the bones. When this stress and inflammation become too pronounced, the body will try to stabilize the situation by adding bone tissue to the stressed area-ossifications.

Once the hoof is balanced again (correct trimming) many of these ossifications may be removed by the body if they inhibit movement, provided that there is still some movement possible.

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Pictures and text: Todd Merrell