

BAREFOOT REHAB



What's the plan?

Frequent trims to start

Rasping weekly will start managing the toes, preventing them from running forward.

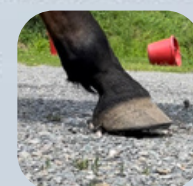
Excess toe length causes strain on the tendons and ligaments, reduces heel first landing and thins out the soles. Some horses transitioning to barefoot need trims every two weeks for one cycle. These are small tweak type trims to start encouraging his soft tissue to strengthen.

Therapy boots

Think of his boots as physical therapy. Boots help to strengthen weak frogs encouraging heel first landings which build the digital cushions and increase circulation in the collateral cartilages, frog and sole. Increased circulation and stronger tissue is built over time via a proper landing patterns using soft padding in the boots. The reason boots work for rehab versus shoes is that the boots allow the blood to pump properly during flight and loading phases unlike shoes which are permanently attached to the hoof, reducing circulation and causing peripheral loading. It is also difficult to keep long toes managed while in shoeing cycles and frog treatment is not possible with shoes that have pads.

Heel first landing

Unhealthy feet land toe first instead of heel first. When landing toe first the horse is causing excessive strain to the tendons and ligaments in the lower limb. Landing toe first is like driving on a flat tire. We want to get some air in those tires by building a healthy back of the foot, encouraging heel first landings.



Patience

Rehabilitating the internal structures of the hoof takes time. Think of going to the gym, you don't build muscle in one workout. As a farrier I used to question barefoot. Why would a person wait so long for soundness when I could fix the foot in one shoeing? What I didn't realize at the time was that I was achieving a temporary fix at best. I wasn't healing the foot from the inside out. I was giving the horse crutches instead of teaching him how to walk again.



January 2021

Shoes pulled and rehab begins

June 2022

Horse landing heel first and sound barefoot

Healthy frogs

Artimud clay is your best friend. Use it frequently in the collateral grooves and central sulcus to keep the area bacteria free, dry, and to strengthen the tissue.

Get your horse moving. Movement and exercise strengthens the frog and increases circulation.



Proper equine nutrition

Diet deficiencies can cause a variety of health problems in horses and tend to show up in the hooves. Two of the most common mineral deficiencies in horses are copper and zinc but many other vitamins and minerals are lacking because our horses tend to live in small paddocks, lacking movement and access to fresh forage. Filling the nutritional gaps in the diet will improve hoof quality, energy levels, immune responses, and behavior.