

Breakover Enhancements For Work and Show Surface Changes

By Dave Farley, APF CF

IN A RECENT ARTICLE WRITTEN BY DOUG WORKMAN, THE IMPORTANCE OF SHOE MODIFICATIONS AND BREAKOVER WERE DISCUSSED. HERE ARE SOME THINGS TO CONSIDER CONCERNING UNNATURAL ENVIRONMENTS THAT SOME HORSES LIVE AND WORK ON.

When thinking about breakover you have to take into consideration the surfaces the horse will be walking on and working on. Natural footing like grass, sand or dirt may not require any modifications to ease breakover. Horses that are living in an unnatural environment may require a different approach to keep the feet sound and healthy. My team and I shoe horses that are working in synthetic surfaces and sometimes we have to check these horses daily; monitoring the changes in their feet and the injuries that could come as a result of these changes. These



changes could cause one or more of the following; complaints of limb swelling and soreness in the lower limb, soft tissue damage within the hoof capsule, soreness in the frog (especially the back half of the frog), stretching of the white line at the toe, cracks in the hoof wall at the toe area, heels



starting to fold forward or corns. Over-reaching, pulling shoes, stumbling or falling, unwilling to make short or small circles are also problems that can occur.

The photo inset shows a shoe with a rocker toe and both medial and lateral sides of the shoe

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THE NATURAL ANGLE

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ground to encourage ease of breakover. This is our modification of choice for horses that live at horse shows, consistently stand or walk on blacktop or concrete surfaces and work in synthetic riding arenas. We have noticed these horses show signs of stress as a result of working in this environment. Their hooves and the shoes we take off tell the story of what would be better suited for them. The wear on the shoe is what to look for. Before making adjustments or modifications to the shoes make sure you have properly trimmed the foot. Variations in wear in the toe, both medial and lateral, and heels wearing more than the toe may indicate a need for enhancements. Sharp edges anywhere on the outside of the shoe on the ground side can be problematic for comfortable movement.

In the trimmed foot image you can see pieces of synthetic material from the arena in the white line area of the heel and bars of the foot. These will be removed before nailing the shoe on. This footing can and will swell after it absorbs moisture. It is very sticky and does not allow the foot to slide when landing or when the foot breaks over. The frog is polished, which is desirable. A freshly trimmed frog is like a pencil eraser and will stick to the footing. A combination of a sticky frog, a shoe with traction and sticky footing could be a reason to choose a different shoe and/or shoe modifications. Horses that have been on these surfaces for a year or more with conventional shoeing can acquire elongated frogs, soreness in the frogs and heels that start to become under run. While this footing looks soft and fluffy it is actually very firm. Farriers should walk on, and investigate, the material to get a better understanding and to compare it to natural footing. We all remember when artificial turf was added to human athletic fields and the media coverage concerning the injuries that came after. Now the equine athlete is experiencing the same issues. This is why we roll and rocker a lot more shoes than in the past, and use shoes like the Kerckhaert Steel Comfort and the new Kerckhaert DF Quarter Motion more often.



Above: Trimmed foot.



Above: Use a hammer handle to see if the frog is in the center of the foot. If so, the horse's limb can and will break over easier.



Left and Below: Side view of the foot trimmed for a rocker motion and the Kerckhaert DF shoe with a rocker toe.



Above: The Kerckhaert DF Front shoe has the amount of material necessary to apply the modifications to improve break over.

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This image is a Kerckhaert DF Select hind shoe with a third calk hole on the outside and extra material ground off the medial side to improve medial breakover. We apply stud holes because there are still a few

places in the U.S. that have grass and/or dirt arenas. For this reason, we have to drill and tap because our horses may compete there. I like the shape of the Kerckhaert DF Select hind shoe, especially in the toe area. The same problems that horses have with breakover on synthetic surfaces on front limbs affect the hind limbs also. Remember that the hoof does not sink into the material and tapered heels can help with this problem. Synthetic footing is sticky - and the foot will not slip or slide. When breakover is hindered, something has to give, and it's usually the limb and/or the foot. It is usually soft tissue above or inside the hoof, the hoof wall and/or the frog that will show signs of conformation changes.

A stretched white line, seedy toe and/or thickening of the wall at the toe could be signs of a foot that would benefit from a shoe modification like the rolled toe or rocker toe and/or moving the shoe back to enhance breakover.



Left: Another view of the hind Kerckhaert DF select with the modifications and showing how much the toe is pulled back to improve breakover on this hind foot.

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Choose Kerckhaert for Shoes that Aid in Breakover



THE TOOL CORNER

Drawing a toe clip using a handled Bob Punch

BY MICHAEL WILDENSTEIN, CJF FWCF (HONS)



PHOTO 1:
The point of the bob punch is about 3/8" inside the width of web angled towards the outside width of web.

PHOTO 2:
The bob punch is struck to push material outside of the width of web.



PHOTO 3:
Cross tong the heels, place the shoe on the edge of the anvil and with hammer blows pull the displaced material onto the face of the anvil.

PHOTO 4:
Traditionally, the clip is drawn as high as the width of web of the shoe is wide.



PHOTO 5:
The toe clip is formed to match the angle of the hoof wall.

PHOTO 6:
Finished toe clip.

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