

Hoof cracks.

Swedish Hoof School

Hoof cracks appears of the same reason as the windshield on your cars cracks when a small stone hits it, and that is because of tensions in the material. I wonder if the producers of windshields doesn't know exactly what shape the windshield shall have but still make the shape just a little wrong on purpose so that these tensions creates when it is bent into place on the car because then they can be sure that the glass cracks if something happens.



There are 8 months and 8 trims between these two pictures. No metal was involved.

The risk is obvious that when a hoof that is not of the right shape is pressed to the ground a tension will appear in the hoof capsule. This tension might very well crack the hoof all the way from ground to coronary band and opens up in every step. It doesn't matter if the hoof is with or without a metal shoe since the hoof deforms just as much on the shoe as on the ground. A hoof in anatomic balance though will be evenly loaded and not deformed in an unnatural way when loaded. I know there are people saying that these cracks don't affect the horse but I have seen all to many horses loosing their bad temper and get a much healthier step as soon as these cracks stops moving to say they are right. I believe that for a horse to have hoof cracks must feel about the same as for a human to have tooth ache (in four mouths) and that can't make anyone happy.

Okay, cracks come from tensions in the material that comes from a shape that is not natural. The problem is that there is nothing that says that the shape problem is situated anywhere near the crack so there is no use for any special treatment of the part close to the crack. Heels that are uneven to the hard sole can cause a crack in the middle of the toe wall and a tilted bar can create a crack at the quarters.

The solution to the problem with cracks is, of course, natural hoof shape. There is no need for a special treatment or a special method. Trim the hoof to anatomic balance and the crack will grow out with the growing hoof wall and never come back. Things like special shoes, screws and metal threads only treat the symptom, the crack, not the faulty balance that causes the tension. If the crack happens to grow out while treated with metal mountings it is because someone happened to correct the shape without knowing it.

Real troublesome and old cracks can need you to trim the hoof very frequently. Maybe once a week to make sure the hoof never gets out of balance and tensions to make the crack open up.

A hoof with reasonable shape and at least fair blood circulation will heal from the inside so you will not have to wait until a whole new wall has grown down for the hoof to stop being troublesome. Many cracked hoof wall stops being a problem sometime around the second trim.



The fact that hoof walls on healthy hooves grows both from the coronary band and from the inside is neither especially well known nor even accepted but if you think of it is really quite obvious. If you measure the length around the coronary band and the corresponding length around the hoof down by the ground you will find the length at ground level is much greater. If the hoof wall only was produced at the coronary band the thickness of the hoof wall would have to be much thinner at ground level than at the coronary band

The fact that hooves that have been shod for a long consecutive time finally get so thin that it is impossible to shoe them anymore is well known but not spoken of. The reason for this is that the blood circulation between the coffin bone and the hoof wall is so poor that the natural growth of the hoof wall from the inside doesn't work any more.

There is not enough blood to supply the cells with neither nutrition nor humidity and this makes the hoof wall both full of dry cracks and of poor quality.

The cure for all this is having the horse barefoot with natural hoof shape that optimises the hoof mechanism in every step.

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On our website, www.SwedishHoofSchool.com, you can find much more information on our clinics where you can get the whole picture from feeding to rasping with logical explanation to everything and many more pictures and even video sequences on hoof function that not many people have seen.