

## Choosing the Perfect Horseshoes

Horseshoes have become synonymous with good fortune. Having them on your horse's feet has little to do with attracting good luck, but a lot with answering to your steed's needs.

Horses in the wild do not require shoes unlike domesticated breeds of horse. Those horses that are not worked out and trained regularly on hard ground do not need them. If a horse's foot is hurt, you will not be able to ride it. In order to maximize a horse's use, horseshoes are needed in order to protect the horse's feet. In their absence, the hoof walls can crack. And a horse with sore feet will be of little use.

One must check all four of the horse's feet everyday. You need to pick them out and ensure that no dirt, stones or other foreign objects get stuck. Daily cleaning of the hooves is essential to proper hoof care, as well as going a long way in preventing any infection in this part of the horse. Failing to clean your horse's hooves on a regular basis puts him at risk

You must also check if the hooves get loose or no longer fits properly. Shod horses also require the visit of the farrier about every 4 to 6 weeks. Each visit would mean placing new shoes. A horse's hoof grows, just like our nails, thus the shoe will stop fitting correctly after some time. The functions and movements of the foot must be taken into consideration when fitting shoes.

Commonly used for shoes are steel and aluminum. Your farrier can help you decide which kind is best for your horse. To make them lighter and to give them a better grip, a groove underneath are placed on most shoes. Those placed in the front limbs are circular, while those on the hinds are diamond-shaped.

Few horses have perfect conformation and many have improper feet. Many horses have boxy feet or club feet while other may have broad flat feet and some have feet that turn in or out. And these characteristics of a horse's foot should be properly addressed. Some of these characteristics are dependent on the breed of the horse. Shoes must fit to accommodate the horse's foot.

Having the shoe is one thing, but a proper shoeing job is another. You should not try putting on your horse's shoes on your own just to save money. The farrier is a trained professional in this aspect, and he has a more extensive line up of equipment and instruments that will suit the needs of your horse. He has tongs, pincers, pullers, nipper, pritchels and a special hoof knife for paring and trimming the foot. He will have the right size of nails to fit every size and type of shoe.

Domesticated breeds of horse are dependent entirely upon humans for their maintenance and comfort. Horses are subject to many ailments. Foot diseases may cause severe lameness and may be made worse by owner neglect, so don't take horseshoeing for granted.

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### About the Author

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