Hoof Terms Glossary

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hoof TERMS

There is a wealth of jargon used throughout the horse world. This is especially true when discussing equine hooves. Learning this vocabulary allows you to better understand articles, event language, and what trainers, farriers, veterinarians, and other horse owners are saying. The following list of terms, while in no way comprehensive, contains some of the terms used to discuss the hoof of your horse.

Bar: Area on the underside of the hoof on either side of the frog where the hoof wall angles in.

Boxy Hooves: Narrow, upright hooves with a small frog and closed heel. Also called *club foot*.

Brushing Boots: Item of horse equipment used to protect the horse's legs from injury due to *brushing*.

Brushing: Where the hoof or shoe hits the inside of the opposite leg, at or near the fetlock. Usually caused by poor *conformation* or *action.*

Coronet: The part of the hoof right above the horny growth; where hoof growth occurs.

Cracked Heels: Inflammation of the heels, resulting in cracked skin and discharge of pus.

Deep Going: Term used to describe ground that is wet or soft, into which the hooves sink.

Dropped Sole: Downward rotation of toe of coffin bone inside hoof due to chronic founder or laminitis.

Farrier: Skilled craftsman who trims horses hooves, and may also shoe horses.

Flat-footed: When the angle of the foot is noticeably less than 45 degrees.

Founder: Inflammation of the laminae of the foot, which serve to attach the coffin bone to the hoof wall; also known as *laminitis*.

Frog: Fleshy pad in the central area of the underside of the hoof. About 50% of the frog is water.

Heel: Back portion of the underside of the hoof.

Hoof Pick: A pick used to remove debris from the hoof.

Hoof: The foot as a whole in horses. The curved covering of horn over the foot.

Horn: Hard, insensitive outer covering of the hoof.

Hoof Wall: Upper portion of the hoof that you see. Divided into heel, quarter, and toe. Grows continuously.

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Laminae: The horny-grooved inside of the hoof.

Laminitis: Inflammation of the laminae (the inside lining of the hoof) of the foot, which serve to attach the coffin bone to the hoof wall; also known as *founder*.

Lateral Cartilages: Wings of cartilage attached to the coffin bone, within the foot.

Navicular Bone: Small bone within the hoof, fitting horizontally between the second phalanx, or short pastern and the coffin bone.

Navicular Disease: Degeneration of the navicular bone, usually on the back surface where the deep flexor tendon passes over the bone. Causes pain and lameness.

Nerve Block: Diagnostic tool in which the veterinarian progressively blocks the nerves of the hoof and leg in order to determine the location of a lameness.

Neurectomy: Cutting of nerves supplying sensation to the foot. Also known as de-nerving. Used as a treatment in cases of navicular disease.

Pathological: A disease condition.

Seedy Toe: Separation of the hoof wall from the sensitive laminae, often caused by neglecting the feet. Sometimes accompanies *laminitis*.

Shoe, To: The act of fitting and securing metal shoes to the horse's hooves, usually done by a *farrier*.

Sidebone: Ossification of the lateral cartilage on either side of the coffin bone within the hoof.

Sole: Portion of the underside of the hoof from the frog to the front part of the white line.

Thrush: Degenerative condition of the frog of the foot characterized by infection and blackening of the affected area; usually occurs in horses housed under unsanitary conditions.

White Line: On underside of hoof, soft structure that delineates sensitive areas (frog, sole, bars), from insensitive ones (hoof wall).

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