
Chapter14 - What is Good Horse Shoeing?

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What's too rough handling by the blacksmith?

This is not a cut and dried subject, for what is too rough to some is not to others and vice versa. Here we will simply point out some common knowledge regarding handling, a task that some farriers are better at than others. The reason for this is that a horseman/woman that decides to become a farrier, is much different than one that has limited experience around horses but has decided that becoming a farrier would be an interesting occupation. To reprimand a horse, a person should first consider the age of the horse, whether it's a mare in foal, the temperament of the horse, the horse's background and the feelings of the owner. This has to be known before anything happens, because often a reprimand has to be instantaneous for the horse does not relate actions done ten or fifteen seconds later. They only become scared and distrusting because they do not know what you're annoyed at. Naturally the safety of the blacksmith is also to be considered.

If the horse clearly deserves a reprimand he still should never be hit on the backbone, the face or the legs with a hard instrument. The intelligent use of a shank on his halter will usually be enough gentle persuasion. Sometimes a sedative or a twitch is necessary, but any more drastic measures should be agreed to by the owner. This is assuming that the blacksmith is also willing, for he is there to shoe, not break horses.

Force is like seasoning in a meal -- a little goes a long way. Once it's noticed that a horse is skiddish about handling his feet, then a little extra work in this area, by the owner, will usually eliminate the need for force.

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