

Chapter16 - What is Good Horse Shoeing?

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A word about corrective horseshoeing.

Corrective horseshoeing is the most interesting area of shoeing for the blacksmith/farrier. It involves a great amount of studying both in the variety of shoes involved and the intricate movements and balance of the horse in motion.

Good internal results from corrective horseshoeing can be obtained if the horse is under five years old. Preferably under three for the best results.

After five years old, the correction is more of an outside restraint or cosmetic improvement, than an inside joint muscle and ligament change. An eye should be kept open for any awkward or unnatural movement in young stock, for most young horses require minor corrective work e.g. hooves turning out or in, off centered hooves, pasterns breaking forward or backward, heels slung under, hocks turned in too much etc.

Corrective horseshoeing does not always give the impression of a pretty shoeing job. An incident occurred where several men were looking at a horse to buy, and commented that the shoeing did not look right. Although they, according to themselves, were horseshoers, they missed the fact that the horse paddled had been observed, the sight of an outside lateral extension with a square toe might not have thrown them so entirely. Even a common trailer on a shoe has been known to bring comments of dismay from those that have shod their own horses.

"How could anyone so misshape a shoe?" they wondered. A little bit of knowledge can be very dangerous, especially when it involves a third party, your horse. The term "Horse Whisper" has become popular these days so a warning to the wise, check out what they're whispering.

If a shoe setting looks so obviously different than a normal setting, it's best not to jump to conclusions, but to ask the reason why.

As was mentioned at the start of this topic, corrective shoeing is the most interesting, but also the most frustrating because it's the least understood area of horseshoeing. Your farrier will be glad to explain the why's of what he/she is doing. Remember also, we are all still learning but the chance of those that are working in this field full time daily of knowing how to address your horses short comings is much greater than the opinions of casual observers and part time metal hangers.

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