

## It's Time To Stop the Madness

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I never have seen myself as a rabble rouser, but I am becoming one. Two recent articles in the EasyCare Blog, and a visit to a poor horse given a horrific trim by a person who has been on barefoot groups on the internet for years, and is still lamming horses, were the final straw.

<http://blog.easycareinc.com/blog/insights-from-the-inside/h hoof-boots-rescue-a-rescue>

<http://blog.easycareinc.com/blog/the-trailhead/tiki-the-lionheart-a-transition-success-story>



Front feet in May 2013 - stubs!

In the photo above left the horse has been butchered. Yes, that's harsh, but it's time to stop pretending that a hoof which looks like that is anywhere near what it should be. The bars have been removed, the sole thinned nearly to the corium, the frog brutally trimmed to make it - what? What really is the purpose? The horse, who was recovering from founder, went from standing and moving to lying down almost all the time. Can that be good? The trimmer, when called by the worried owner, responded with the statement that she could come back - she probably *had not taken off enough!* Are we to believe cutting off more would make the horse feel better??

The madness is that this is not an isolated case. It happens all the time (see EasyCare blog article "Boots Rescue a Rescue").

The photos above were taken on May 27, 2013. I took the photos below on my first visit - June 24, 2013. A month later. Photos can be misleading, so I used my hoof pick for scale. As you can see, the total height of the hoof - after a month of growth - is just about exactly 2.75 inches. If you want to see how short that really is, get a ruler and take a look.



As you can see the horse did its best to grow back what was cut off. All the concavity cut in is gone and because it was wounded, the sole is now convex. The part of trimming aggressively that no one tells you about or posts photos of.

It's time to stop the madness! If a horse is not sore before a trim it should be *unacceptable* that the horse is sore AFTER the trim. Common sense and simple logic tell us the trim caused the soreness. There is no excuse for it. There is no need to trim a horse to the point of lameness *for its own good*. Do NOT believe the lie.

For some reason, when it comes to our horses' feet, we are willing to believe almost anything. Why? I often hear that people like their trimmers, even though they are not happy with the trimming! I respond by saying, "would you let someone do brain surgery on you, just because you liked them?"

Would you accept your child being worse after medical treatment than before - month after month? Would you accept your hands being so sore you couldn't touch anything after a manicure? Would

you accept your lawn being mown down to dirt every week? Nowhere but with horses do we accept BAD results as normal.

There is an interesting article on Pete Ramey's site. Written in 2006! And yet who has really listened. Read it and do not let anyone trim your horse who doesn't BELIEVE it.

<http://hoofrehab.com/thebars.htm>

A properly trimmed horse should not need boots! That is a fact. Wild horses do not wear boots. And no they are not ridden, but the Indians rode barefoot and their horses outperformed the cavalry on a regular basis.

This lie - and it IS a lie - is told by people UNABLE to get your horse sound, as an excuse to keep on torturing your horse. Yes, they have good intentions. Just like your neighbor who would volunteer to do brain surgery on you. But the road to Hell is paved with good intentions. Good intentions are not enough. Demand competency. Your horse's health should come before your trimmer's feelings.

You can always do a simple test - and no, it will not harm your horse. Just leave your horse's feet alone for a couple months. If your horse improves it should tell you something. Remember, no one trims wild horses. Just the ground. I have horses who only get trimmed once a year and their feet barely need a trim then. And I am not alone. Check out this site <http://rockleyfarm.blogspot.com>.

The problem with many trimmers is that trimming is about *them* - not the horses. They are like surgeons who are excited about doing surgery. They will tell you how great they are and how great the surgeries went - they don't care that all the patients die. And yes, that is a harsh, non PC, statement. But it is true.

The photo below represents what a hoof should look like. The foot below can travel over rock without a care, the horse to whom the foot belongs doesn't even try to go on soft ground but chooses to go straight down a rocky road. THAT is a healthy foot. It is not a perfect hoof. But it is good and the horse is completely sound on all terrain. That is the goal. The goal is not to look a certain way - the goal is for the hoof to FUNCTION for the horse.



The foot above has a sole, a frog, and hoof wall. When and where was it decided that horses only need half a foot? Horses survived, sound, for 65 million years, until they met the average barefoot trimmer!!



The photo to the left shows what a hoof should look like. Not like a stub.

So what should you, as a horse owner, do?

**First, get references.**

Ask if the horses trimmed by the trimmer are sound without boots. Key question.

Ask if the horses are sore after a trim

Ask to see photos if possible.

**Second, talk to the trimmer and ask about their trimming philosophy.**

If they say "Pete Ramey's trim" (or anyone's), ask them to explain it to you.

Ask if they can supply you with photos of horses they've trimmed for a long time. They might not be able to - I can't. I don't take photos of sound horses, though I should.

If they say they studied under someone - get references. It's very easy to say anything.

**Third - watch carefully how they trim that first foot.**

If it's too aggressive, stop them and say you won't be needing their services. Do not subject your horse to pain to avoid hurting someone's feelings. Especially someone who doesn't mind making your horse lame.

**Fourth - if the horse is sore after the trim . . .**

If the trim looks okay but your horse is sore after it (and wasn't sore before). Tell the trimmer your horse is sore. Weigh their response. If there is a specific reason (and sometimes - rarely - there is) then consider it. If the response is some version of "that's normal" or "that's to be expected", say you won't need them to come back. Text them if you don't like confrontation.

Remember your horse is like your child - he/she depends on YOU for their well-being.

Really, just listen to your horse and listen to your gut. Do not accept boots as a lifetime prognosis. If everyone demands GOOD hoofcare, things will change.