

## Preventative Shoeing Or Trimming For A Horse That "TOES IN"



*"It takes a knowledgeable horse owner and trainer to address this properly. Once a person can be aware and notice that the hoof is not aligning straight and is toeing in, then the next step is to approach your farrier with the concern. Together it can be discussed and addressed. You may not be able to get it perfect and fix it entirely, but you can help it." There may be a question that most owners face when they first purchase a new horse or foal out their new baby from their own breeding program....*

### **Q: Why could it be bad if a horse is toeing in and is left unaddressed?**

Bill Gray says, "If a horse toes in naturally, then it can cause unsoundness issues. This can possibly put unwanted stress on the inside and outside tendons which can lead to unsoundness issues and poor performance. From this, a horse has been known to pop splints on the inside as well."

### **Q: Do you work on a weanling that toes in or leave it alone and hope it can take care of itself as it matures?**

Bill Gray says, "Go ahead and shape the hoof according to the problem. If they toe in, then go ahead and take any excessive hoof off on the inside and leave what you can on the outside. This will help one from toeing in excessively. You may not be able to totally keep them from toeing in but one may be able to help keep it from developing too badly. If you leave it alone and do nothing, then it will grow to toeing in."

### **Q: When do you advise an owner to go ahead and have this issue addressed on their colts or horses?**

Bill Gray says, "You want this to be done before each growth spurt for best results. As a general rule, each horse will go through a growth spurt at 7 months old, 14 months old, 21 months old, and 28 months old; so it would be best every 7 months. Make sure you have this looked at right before each growth spurt for best results."

### **Working on an Extremely Pigeon-toed Horse**

Bill Gray had the privilege of working with Multiple Stakes Winner, Bartonville which was a 1976 gelding by Mito Paint, that was out of My Regards by Roma Charge. He was running at 870 yards at that time in 1980 when Bill was approached to work on him. During this time he was always running and placing 2nd and 3rd against top horses in the nation. The groom that was with him for over a year noticed that he had swelling in his ankles and was concerned and told Bill that he thought that his toeing in was affecting his ability to run and also hurting him. Bill and the groom came together and knew something needed to be changed with his shoeing. They took the shoe and slid it to the outside 1/2". The toe grab on a race plate was causing him to turn in a little more as well. They resolved this problem by changing that particular hoof to one size larger shoe to help straighten the hoof and turning the middle of the shoe 1/2" to the outside. Three days later the groom told Bill "bid on this horse in his next race". The groom said this because he noticed that his legs were tighter than they had been that whole year he been with him. Bartonville went on to win his next race and made "Horse of the Meet". He went on to win 4 races in a

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row after that, two at Ruidoso Downs and two at Albuquerque. After his time with Bill at Ruidoso he went to another track and was with another farrier. Unfortunately his shoeing job was changed again and he slowly declined in his wins and eventually was retired.

### **Point of Break Over**

By sliding the shoe to the outside, this would allow the hooves to bring the middle of the toe grab to what would be the "middle of the hoof" if his hoof was straight forward. You would want to slide it outside more because you want the horse to have the "break over or point of break over" in the middle of the toe grab. "Breaking Over or point of break over" is a term that means the location at which the horse's foot rolls over when in motion. A horse owner can be taught to look for this by looking at the bottom of the horse's shoe and see where the horse shoe is breaking or wearing down. If the horse shoe is breaking or wearing down in the middle of the shoe, then that would be correct. If the breaking or wearing down is on either side of the shoe and not in the middle, then this is not good for your horse and could

cause unsoundness issues, meaning they are toeing in or toeing out.

The toe usually lines up with the frog and therefore, we naturally line up the shoe with the frog for a "correct" shoeing. It's not always proven though to line up the shoe with the frog for a "correct" shoe. There are times where if a horse toes in, then you may need to turn the shoe out a little and help turn out the toe or front of the hoof. We want the leg to swing straight forward and straight back. If a horse paddles in or out that means that they toe in or may toe out. This means they have lost motion and thus slower movement in their stride.

### **Landing Flat in the Middle**

If the foot breaks off on one side, it can cause the foot to turn to the side that hasn't broken off. Or if it's trimmed inappropriately (one side left longer than the other side) it can cause the foot or the limb to turn during the growth spurt. If you are working on any horse from a weanling to an older horse, you are constantly trying to get the break over in the middle of the foot and land flat. The older horse in the example was still pigeon-toed but was landing flat and breaking over straight. When these principles are not taken into consideration the pigeon-toed horse lands on the inside of his hoof and rocks to the middle; which puts more pressure on one side of the joint than the other. If you see your horse landing on one side of his foot before the other side, he is too long on the side he strikes the ground first and rocks one way or the other. This is one of the things that are hard on the joints. Keep in mind the horse's hoof does not always grow evenly. When you see your horse landing on one side off his foot, this is when you need to get together with your farrier to get your horse's hoof to hit the surface flat so the weight is distributed to the joints evenly.



*Bill Gray*