

Saving Soles

By Amy Seigel, contributing editor

These days it seems like more and more horse owners are baring it all—when it comes to their horses' hooves, that is. However, there are times when even the most dedicated barefooted fans (and those with shod horses that occasionally come in from the pasture minus one iron crescent) find their equine partners in need of a little extra protection and support. Thankfully, today's high-tech hoof boots are more than up to the challenge.

Far from the cumbersome clunkers of days gone by, the newest additions to the hoofboot world are designed for outstanding performance and ultimate equine comfort. Materials and technologies borrowed from the world of human athletics—from running shoes to snowboard boots and bindings—have helped spur the development of boots that not only last longer, but support, cushion, and fit like never before. This new generation of performance hoof-wear allows barefoot horse owners to add extra protection only when needed—whether that's for a simple Sunday afternoon trail ride or an international endurance race.

For the well-shod set, new pad technologies are giving equine athletes with minor joint problems the chance at longer, sounder careers, along with speeding the recovery time for sore-footed competitors. Composed of materials ranging from EVA foam and soft gels to honey-combed plastic and polymers, high-tech hoof pads are designed to address a wide variety of physical problems by equalizing the weight-bearing load across the entire surface of the sole.

Many of these pads can be worn in conjunction with shoes, boots, or therapeutic wraps to ease the discomfort of arthritic joint diseases like navicular and founder, or simply make soft-soled horses more comfortable. In addition, pads constructed out of closed cell EVA foam (like Equifit's Hoof Savers) are also non-absorbent, making them the perfect choice for therapeutic applications involving any kind of medicinal hoof-packing.



Preventative Measures

You can help your customers ward off the sometimes devastating effects of hoof problems and diseases by offering them products and advice designed to prevent the problems from happening in the first place.

- Horse owners need to have an ongoing appointment with their farriers. Every six to eight weeks is recommended for keeping hooves properly trimmed. Shoes should also be reset at this time, if applicable.
- Stables should be kept clean and as dry as possible, with enough bedding for each horse so that they are never standing in wet conditions.
- Horses kept in arid areas have a tendency to have dry hooves. Applying a moisturizer daily can prevent cracking and peeling that can lead to much bigger problems.
- Horse's hooves should be cleaned out every day with a hoof pick.
- Some horses are simply more prone to hoof problems than others. Feeding supplements that help strengthen the hoof wall can help keep problems from getting out of hand.
- If anything suspicious begins to develop, seek immediate help from a veterinarian. The more quickly potential problems are addressed, the more likely it is that the horse will make a complete recovery with no long-term effect to his mobility.

Extras on the Web!

There's more at www.tackntogs.com:

- Breaking Industry News
- Informational Videos
- Online Archives
- Markets Calendar
- Business Sense

Tack'n
togs



FREE SHIPPING
No Minimum

Fall '09 Trade Show SPECIALS

- Clarity
- Settelex
- SteadyUp
- ZeroBute

Buy 2
and get
1 FREE
MIX OR MATCH OF
EQUAL OR LESSER
VALUE

(800) 462-8982 • www.feedmarkusa.com
643B SW 15th St • Ocala, FL 34471 • (352) 620-0805 • Fax (352) 620-8607