



Foot Balance Radiographs.

The foot balance radiographs included in the Healthy Horse Club are to be taken at our Hook Norton Surgery. Radiographs can be taken at your yard, however, this will incur a visit charge.

Please contact us to book your Healthy Horse Club foot balance radiographs. T: 01608 730085



FARRIERY AND FOOT BALANCE

The modern horse we know today has evolved over millions of years, surviving quite happily without human intervention with regards to hoof maintenance. In a natural environment, horses graze varied terrain, wearing away the excess hoof growth to keep the hoof at a constant length without the need for trimming or shoeing. Horses are now bred for performance and the way in which the modern equine is maintained and managed means that hoof care and maintenance is very important in ensuring soundness and performance. A well balanced foot will be symmetrical in size and shape and land flat on the ground.

A well balanced foot.



Foot conformation

The hoof is made up of many tiny tubes (called horn tubules) that, when packed together, form a very strong horny capsule around a similarly shaped bone inside, which is attached to the rest of the skeleton. A horse's conformation is such

An overgrown foot with a long toe and distorted hoof capsule.



that from the fetlock down, the limb is projected forward, along with the hoof capsule and not straight down like a post. This means that as the hoof grows longer it also grows more forward, thus increasing the overall length from the fetlock. Significant increases in length and/or distortion of the foot shape can result in lameness both from within the hoof and structures further up the limb. Regular trimming and correction of distortions is vitally important for maintaining soundness.



Foot balance, front to back.

This should be assessed from the side on a level surface. The foot should be aligned so that the hoof-pastern axis forms an unbroken line when viewed from the side (figure 3). A long toe/low heel conformation increases the loading on the back of the foot, predisposing the horse to pain, inflammation and damage to the navicular bone and supporting structures. Excessive wear of the toe, in association with increased heel length will result in an upright, boxy hoof capsule, leading to conditions such a club foot.

A straight hoof pastern axis.



Foot balance, side to side

Also known as medio-lateral balance, this refers to the relative symmetry of the foot and should be assessed by viewing the foot from in front and behind, as well as from above with the foot lifted up. Medio-lateral imbalance leads to uneven loading of the internal tissues of the foot, with the resultant accumulation of damage, causing inflammation, injury and lameness.

Medio-lateral hoof wall asymmetry and imbalance.



Radiograph examination

Radiograph examination can help determine the relative positions of the pedal bone and hoof wall and assess shoe placement.

The front of the hoof wall and pedal bone should be parallel. The pedal bone should be 5-10 degrees from the ground bearing surface. The centre of a circle around the coffin joint should be directly above the centre point of the shoe.

