



Friday April 24, 3009

## Hoof Care

On Friday, April 24, professional farrier and hoof specialist, Craig Lindauer, began the painstaking task of correcting the feet of some of the rescued horses that were taken from the Deerfield area this past Monday, April 20. Craig is also the blacksmith for Fieldstone Farm Therapeutic Riding Center in Chagrin Falls, and like so many other folks in our community, graciously donated his time and talents to get the rescued horses started on the long road to recovery. Craig's work with this neglected group of horses has been nothing short of amazing. This horse's hooves were horrifically overgrown. In order to removed the excessive length...

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...saws needed to be used to cut through the thick, twisted material of the hooves. A small hand saw that was originally brought in was not even strong enough to handle the difficult job, and a slightly larger saw had to be brought in. The hoof

material that was cut off was saved and bagged. The entire process was slow and cautious, making sure that the horse got to rest between getting all four feet done. Craig's job was very difficult and labor intensive.



“This is the worst case I have ever seen,” was Craig's comment.

On Friday, not all of the horses were able to be trimmed, due to the trimming process having to be slow and deliberate with each rescued horse. One by one, the horse's will continue to have

their feet assessed and treated with the best professional care possible. Each horse presents it's own unique set of hoof issues. The examples shown in these photos are all from but one horse .



Thanks to Craig's many years of professional shoeing and hoof expertise, this horse was freed from the restraints of what is known as "elf shoes", and his hooves are now back to as normal as possible at this time. After removing approximately 8" of overgrown hoof, the horse can now stand somewhat normally and is getting used to walking again. It was rather sad to see the horse learn to walk all over again without having to worry about his extra long feet getting in



his way. Craig explained that it will now take about a year for this horse's hooves to once again grow normally and to be shaped into a more normal foot for the horse. We expect him to continue to recover with regular hoof trims every three weeks to five weeks for the remainder of the year.



Many thanks to the hard-working volunteers who have helped

handle and hold the horses while they are having their hooves trimmed. It is a difficult job that takes an experienced horse person. Luckily, we have been blessed with an entire community who cares! The volunteers on hand were in awe of Craig's work after several hours of working on just this one horse were completed. He looked like and entirely new horse.



# “No Hoof, No Horse”

*\*We ask an awful lot of an animal who walks on his middle toenails. Humans have recognized for centuries that the foundation of a horse’s soundness lies in his hooves—“No foot, no horse” is about as basic a principle as there is. It all comes down to the forces exerted by a 1,000- to 2,000-pound animal on four rather small and specialized bits of keratin.\**



Example of a healthy hoof



Horse from Deerfield

**It is normally recommended that a horse’s hooves be trimmed approximately every six weeks. Many farrier’s recommend corrective trimming every three weeks for a horse that may have severe hoof issues.**

## \*How Does the Hoof Grow?

Understanding the structures of the hoof gives us a basis for understanding how it grows. The rate and



Horse from Deerfield

quality of growth varies, just as it does in human fingernails. But while we humans no longer depend on our “claws” for survival, horses *do* depend on their hooves, so there’s considerable evolutionary advantage in having good feet.

The hoof wall of a normal adult horse grows at a rate of approximately 0.24-0.4 inches (six to 10 millimeters) per month. At the toe, it takes between nine and 12 months for hoof horn to grow down from the coronet to the ground surface; at the quarters, six to eight months; and at the shorter heels, four to five months.

The rate of hoof growth is considerably faster in young horses than in adults. The foot of a nursing foal, for example, grows at a rate of about 0.6 inches (15 mm) per month. As the horse matures, the rate slows; yearling feet grow about 0.48 inches (12 mm) per month.

There are a number of considerations affecting hoof growth, including:

- **Environmental moisture**—Extremely dry conditions retard hoof growth. Generally speaking, hooves grow

faster in soggy, wet conditions.



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