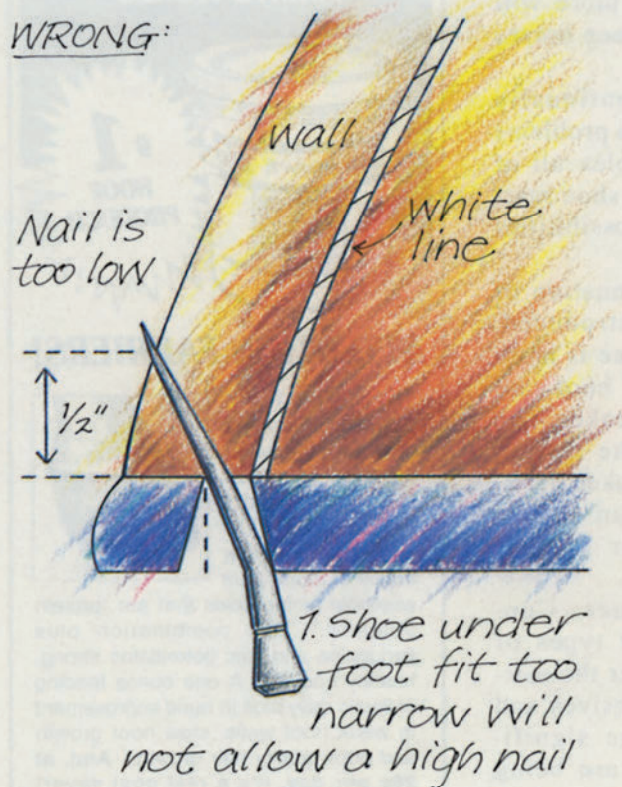
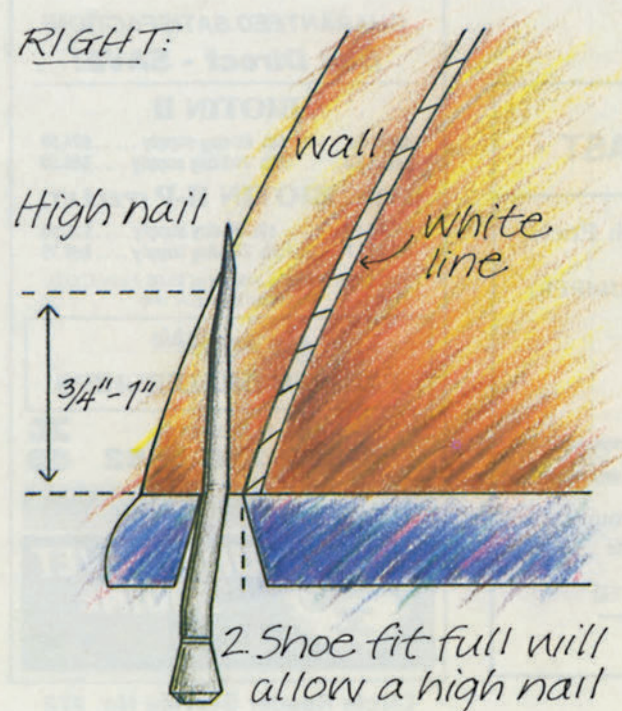


WRONG:



RIGHT:



HIGH

NAILS

VS.

LOW

NAILS

By Donald R. Jones

OVER THE YEARS, I have become convinced a great number of horses are being shod too often.

Why is it necessary to shoe a horse every 4 weeks? Is it because we've been taught it's the proper thing to do? Or is it due to low nailing concerns?

I think it is a little of both, but low nailing is the real culprit in a lot of cases.

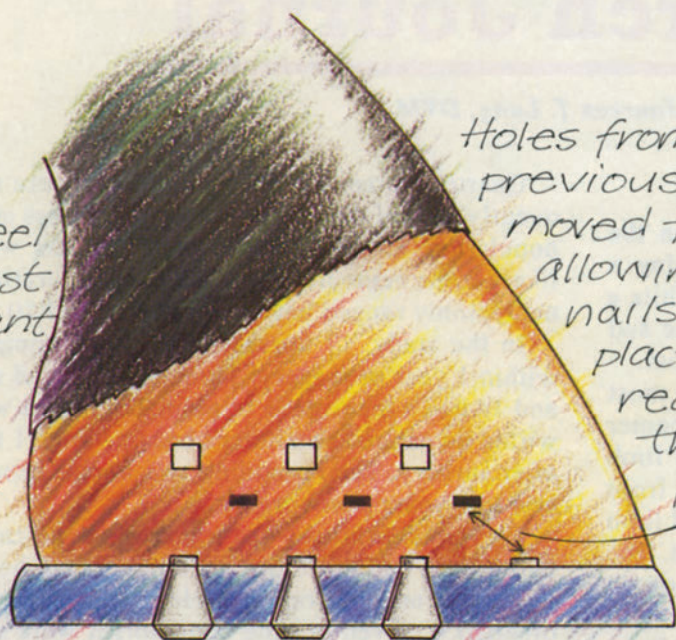
Shoeing too often, combined with low nails causes more ragged, sore footed horses than anything else I have seen in more than 25 years of shoeing.

A vicious cycle is started when we use low nails. This causes the shoe to work loose in about 3 weeks, usually making it necessary to reset the shoe in 4 weeks.

The consequences are cracked, ragged nubs full of holes for the shoer to deal with when nailing shoes back on. As a result, the horse is often sore for a few days after shoeing.

It's real easy to get caught up in this sort of thing especially if the owner has been led to believe the horse must have new shoes every 4 weeks.

High heel
nail most
important



Holes from the
previous shoeing
moved forward,
allowing high
nails to be
placed to the
rear of
the hole
pattern

3. High nails & tight shoes will
not wear out the hoof wall

"This method
will not solve
all poor quality
hoof problems.
However, I
believe it will
solve a very
high percentage
of them . . ."

HISTORICAL SHOEING CONCERNS

I believe this was all brought on years ago through the use of poor fitting shoes which were too narrow and ran under the foot, resulting in low nails. There is no other way out as shown in figure 1.

This problem could also result from a lack of nailing confidence on the part of the shoer. Either way, the foot ends up practically being destroyed every few weeks with low nails.

WHAT TO DO?

The solution is a simple one – fit the shoe a little full and drive high nails as shown in figure 2. This will result in the shoes staying tight longer, which means it will not be necessary to shoe the horse as often. When you eliminate loose shoes, hoof wall growth becomes the main factor and will determine how often the animal must be shod. Some horses can go 6 weeks and others can go 8 weeks without being reshod, depending on how fast the horse's hoof grows.

What makes high nailing so beneficial to the hoof wall? It gives the hoof more time to rest and grow excess hoof wall. This makes it much easier to trim and dress the foot for shoeing. Once stretching out the period of time between

shoeing has been accomplished, the shoe stays tight and the hoof wall stays together better. As the foot grows, the old nail holes move toward the toe, leaving room for a high nail in the rear as shown in figure 3.

This method will not solve all poor quality hoof problems. However, I believe it will solve a very high percentage of them.

NOT A PERFECT METHOD

If we would analyze why we do certain things, it could change our thinking for the better in many shoeing cases.

Donald Jones is an AFA Certified Farrier and the owner of NC Tool Co. in Pleasant Garden, N.C.