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FPD is now the exclusive distributor of Razerhorse products in the U.S. and Canada. Be sure to ask your FPD Dealer about Razerhorse shoes and pads.

For more information on these products, visit farrierproducts.com and subscribe to FPD's YouTube channel @farrierproducts to watch exclusive videos on the Razerhorse propads and steel shoes.



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MAY » Liberty Cu 5 Combo Slim

As a show of our appreciation to the farrier industry, we will be conducting a drawing each month on Facebook. Thirty names will be drawn each month to receive the free item for that month. **During the month of May, the giveaway item will be a box of the Liberty Cu 5 Combo Slim nails.**

Follow FPD on Facebook @farrierproductdistribution to see what we're offering in the current month. This giveaway is only valid in the U.S. and Canada.

Liberty Cu 5 Combo Slim:

- Longer length and slightly slimmer shank than the Liberty 5 Combo
- Ideal for SX-8 shoes in larger size and any shoe requiring a bit more length and head mass
- 52.55mm



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Shoeing The Roping Horse

By Michael Chance, CJF APF



The average age of the rope horses you see at the top end of the game is 15-18 years old. Many of these horses reach the peak of their career with existing maladies and management of soundness is the key factor of these horses. These horses will work temporarily, regardless of what we do to them, as seen in **Photo 2**.

The most common concern of cowboys is shoe pulling. Rarely does a horse of sound mind and body pull a shoe, if the foot is properly balanced and supported. **Photo 3** (same horse as *Photo 2* after shoeing) In fact, it is less likely under normal circumstances. I choose not to cheat any horse of the advantages of proper shoeing because of occasional lost shoes.

Chronic shoe pulling is most often caused by bad management, such as turning them out in hazardous environments, such as deep mud, fencing on the ground and so on. This is not your fault, unless you don't point it out and show customers their roles and responsibilities. The management of the equine athlete is a team effort.

Lameness is a common cause of gait faults. Veterinarians play a key role and can make life less stressful, provided you're fortunate enough to have a good relationship with the good doctors in your area. It's amazing how a chronic shoe puller is miraculously cured by a simple hock lubrication. Calf horses, like reiners are notoriously hard on their hocks. It comes with the job.

Over the years of practice and study, I've developed a picture in my mind of a balanced and functional foot. Good basic hoof prep with a little extra attention to details will solve most problems and keep a horse sound under normal circumstances. (**Photo 4**) This is my approach to what some refer to as corrective shoeing. In general, I simply trim away the parts that do not fit the balanced picture. I take away all the excess hoof, but avoid excessive trimming and rasping. Your goal should be to preserve as much hoof mass as possible. Trim heels to the tallest, widest aspect of the trimmed frog. The frog should be somewhat parallel to the ground. While dressing the outside of the hoof, keep your goals in mind.

There are as many ways to shoe roping horses as there are horses. Each one is unique, with its own strengths and weaknesses. A sound horse with good conformation, in a desirable environment, would do well barefoot. Yet this scenario is rare. Their riders each have their own set of priorities, skill levels, and schedules to factor in. Because of all these variables, each horse should be assessed as a unique individual. Communication and observation skills are essential in determining how best to shoe each horse in order that he may perform at his peak within his environment. For instance, you would not put sliders on a calf horse that chased cur dogs and wild cows during the week. You wouldn't square a toe and dub his hind foot if he were weak in his stop. These are all factors you must learn through communication with rider/trainer and or using your observation skills. You should have a good understanding of the horse's job description.





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Fit a shoe that compliments what is trimmed. I often choose a shoe based on the hoof's condition, allowing me to use a smaller nail, for example. I prefer a shoe that is punched coarse. This allows me to nail in the white line, yet still fits the outside perimeter. Hoof walls will become thicker and of better quality if we allow them to. Rasping on the outside of the foot serves no practical function. Your shoe fit and its placement is what does the work **(Photo 5)**.

A horse is a horse. It makes no difference what his job is: dressage, walker, or ropers, they need the same trimming principles. The center of the foot is the same respectively.

The posterior portion of the foot must balance the anterior regardless of the length of toe and/or hoof conformation **(Photo 6)**. Enhanced break over is very important, yet it's only part of AP balance. Posterior support is the other half of the equation and must be addressed to achieve AP balance. Think about the posterior portion of the foot, the portion that bears the weight and does the work **(Photo 7)**.

Proper hoof prep and shoeing of the hind feet is just as important as the front. If not, a sore or dysfunctional hind can dump extra work to the front and set you up to fail. In order for a horse to stop properly, the hind foot must slide. If the foot is

excessively dubbed or pushed back, it won't function properly. On the other hand, excessive toe length isn't necessary and can cause undo stress on the limbs. Somewhere in the middle is where I find works well **(Photo 8)**. One quarter inch to 3/8" longer than the fronts is a good place to start. There should be enough toe and or shoe in front of the center of the foot to allow it to stay on top of the ground going in. The heels of the hind shoe must be of sufficient length to slide on once it's under the horse. It is sometimes necessary to sweeten or taper the branches of a hind shoe to enable the heel of the foot to fall while the toe stays on top of the ground. The

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opposite drives the toe straight in, therefore you don't get the slide you want. Anything you do to facilitate the sliding stop makes it easier on the horse as well as the ropers ability to step off **(Photo 9)**.

A hind shoe of adequate length also helps keep them off the front shoes. The extra length causes the hind to plant a little sooner. A horse that spreads excessively in the stop can't stay in it. Check medial/lateral hoof balance and make sure your shoe is pointed straight with the frog **(Photo 10)**.

It's sometimes necessary to lower the medial heel and build a shoe with a little extra length in the medial branch **(Photo 11, 12)**.

The more educated we are the more confidence we have. We are more able to communicate with confidence, what we do and why we do it. Education and experience is the key to success but also helps you to know your limitations. Nothing is more frustrating than giving your all to a customer with unrealistic expectations. If you learn to listen well and observe, you can pick out the things on which you can have an impact and alleviate complications and disappointment. Education gives you the confidence and skill to handle this aspect of your job well and to your advantage. ■



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