

Geri White is an AHA and ESA certified barefoot hoof care specialist and a field instructor for the Equine Sciences Academy. She also currently serves on the Board of Directors and Chair the AHA Education Committee. Geri works with other equine professionals in Dentistry, Chiropractic, Acupuncture, Homeopathy, Massage, Reiki, Body Work and Essential Oils in order to offer whole-horse wellness.

She believes in educating her clients and teaching owners through Educational Clinics in a more natural paradigm of horse keeping. She believes that healthy feet grow from healthy horses. Healthy in body, mind and spirit. She offers, "more than just a trim. . ." This is the second half of my interview with Geri White. Click [here](#) to see Part 1.

As a barefoot hoof care specialist, what are some common hoof issues that you deal with?

My "motto" printed on my business card states "It's More Than Just a Trim". The hooves are the sum total of the horse that they support. Everything that affects the horse shows up in the feet." For example, the rings some people call stress rings or event rings, and pink or red bruising/ blushing in the hoof walls as well as flares and persistent cracks. These are warning signs that there's an imbalance somewhere. If the diet and environment are not right I see thrush, underdeveloped frogs and weak soft structures in the caudal part of the hoof, and often laminitis (either sub-clinical, seasonal, or chronic) and outright founder as well as abscesses.

If the horse has a dental malocclusion or TMJ pain that limits the movement of the head either forward/ backward or side to side, the pathology in the mouth dictates how the horse will move its body, which is reflective in the way the feet grow to support that movement good or bad. This will show up as postural flares or cracks because the horse is compensating.

Conformation also dictates the way a foot grows to support it. Posture is developed by many things that include the way the horse chooses to stand while grazing or resting, or if they have gastric ulcers (and many do), or an old injury. The way the saddle fits the horse or the way the rider sits on that saddle—again this will show up as flares, cracks or excessive wear in parts of the hoof and not enough in others, which stresses muscles and bone alignment leading to injury and arthritis.

The damaging effects of repeated, lifelong shoeing leaves a coffin bone residing lower in the hoof capsule, a longer toe wall and less efficient movement in the coffin joint. Quite often the horses heels are contracted, the frogs atrophied and removed from the purpose of shock absorption. Some of these horses that have lived their lives this way for so long and can only come so far in their transition and may at best be pasture sound.

So our expectations should always keep in mind all these things and what it will take to correct some of the hoof problems are quite often dental issues, musculo-skeletal

problems, improper diet, ill-fitting saddles and tack as well as owner body problems from injuries or lack of fitness. I have found that unless there is an outright injury to the foot or a birth defect, most hoof problems find their source in some of these things I have just mentioned. Now we are back to “It’s More Than Just a Trim”. If you can find and correct the source of the problem, the hoof will follow behind with gentle coaching.

How important do you believe diet and environment are in a horse’s overall hoof health?

These 2 things are very important. Gut health and motility are the heartbeat of health. The diet provides the nutrients and movement helps get the nutrients to the body and especially the hooves. Vital organs receive first dibs on the nutrients, so if there is not enough left over for the skin, hair and hooves, we see it very easily in a lack of quality. The diet should be as close to the horse’s nature as you are able to provide, and this is not as difficult as it sounds. Forage first in the form of mixed grass hay and limited grass is all most horses need with the addition of supplements as needed.

I am an advocate of a NO GRAIN diet and NO processed feeds full of industrial byproducts artificially-made palatable. A huge contributor to the lack of gut health comes from the inappropriate and regular use of chemical wormers, excessive vaccinations, feeding concentrates, and not enough fiber in the diet, resulting in gastric ulcers. Feeding and keeping a horse in a way disrespects their nature is trying to put a square peg in a round hole. Something has to break. Again, the hooves are the sum total of the body systems- everything we do with, for, and to our horses shows up in the newspaper of the horse- the hooves don’t lie.

Movement is medicine. There is nothing that you can offer to replace it, and the environment the horse lives in either suppresses it or stimulates it. When the horse does not move, they gain weight, the blood and lymph systems do not flow as they should and the body stagnates – especially the hooves. I have seen amazing changes in horses in as little as 2-4 weeks, just by increased movement alone. I cannot stress this enough.

I keep my horses in a Paddock Paradise environment, which is a track or trail system that goes around the perimeter of my horse part of the property. Their pastures are in the middle where I allow them to spend only 3 hours of the early morning, then they are on the trail moving between a water hole, slow hay feeders, groves and trees.

Five horses ranging from ages 6-29 walk around most of the time on sand, dirt, gravel, and some hills, and the setup keeps their life interesting. Food placement and herd hierarchy motivate the movement. If you don’t have a lot of land, this is by far the best way to keep horses that resembles patterns found in nature. I do have a clinic where I teach this– addressed in the next question.

I know you teach horse and hoof care clinics for owners. Can you tell us a little bit about what you offer in the clinics?



My 2 most popular clinics are a 2-day Hoof Trimming Clinic, and a 1-day Paddock Paradise Clinic.

The 2-day Hoof Trimming Clinic is for those who want to learn to trim their own horses and offers 6 hands-on spots. People who are curious about Barefoot Hoof Care or are not ready to try with rasp in hand can audit this clinic for 1 day or both. On day 1, the morning consists of class time. I have Power Point Presentations detailing my approach to whole horse hoof care. In the afternoon, participants are given cadaver hooves to work with for trimming, and after trimming we dissect them. I have always felt that dissection will teach them more about the foot than pictures and anything I can say. It helps a lot of people connect the dots.

I leave plenty of time for Q&A. On day 2 we have a demo horse. I have the owner fill out one of my information sheets prior to the clinic and forward any x-rays. I do a complete assessment of the horse, trim, boot if necessary, and help the owner with a care plan and finding a trimmer to continue with until they are ready to pick it up on their own. We also have a tool-sharpening segment, and in the afternoon all hands-on participants will trim a front and hind hoof on a live horse under my supervision.

I also have great door prizes with useful items that were presented and used during the weekend and found in the Power Points that focus on horse keeping. Every group has been amazing!

In the Paddock Paradise Clinic, I present at a facility or horse owner's place that has one set up. I offer them at my barn as well. During this clinic I have Power Points for each segment, which include: Introduction to Paddock Paradise– How and why it works, how it helps your land and your horses. Slow Feeders- How they work in conjunction with the horses digestive anatomy, and how to use them in Paddock Paradise. DIY Fecal Egg Counting (yes, you can learn to do this yourself.) How and why it is important

to use homeopathics, herbs, and oils as opposed to chemicals, and what it takes to make a healthy gut.

Manure Management in Paddock Paradise- spreading, composting, etc. I have pictures of most of these clinics over the last few years on my website.

My clinic organizer, Michelle Hall, can help put together something to fit whatever most people want to offer.