

Words:

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Spotlight on hoof care

A round up of the best ways to make sure your horse's hooves stay as healthy as possible

Hooves carry your horse's entire weight and are built to handle pressure, adapt to terrain and regenerate over time. Whether barefoot or shod, regular care, a balanced diet and support from a qualified farrier all play an important role.

Daily care

Pick out your horse's feet at least once a day to check for stones, debris, cracks, splits, thrush and, where applicable, loose or worn shoes. Regular checks allow you to spot any issues early on. Prompt action can prevent discomfort and more serious problems.

Changing seasons

As spring sets in, it's important to remember that hoof moisture changes with the seasons. Dry weather can make hooves

brittle, increasing the risk of cracks and splits. Wet conditions can soften hooves, making them more prone to infections like thrush. Hooves are breathable and sensitive to environmental changes, so consistent care is key year-round.

- Use hoof dressings in dry weather to help maintain moisture – ask your farrier for advice
- Always provide a clean, dry place for your horse to stand, such as hardstanding in fields or clean bedding in housing/stables.

Every horse is different

We recommend using a registered farrier for trimming and shoeing. Registered farriers are regulated by the Farriers Registration Council (FRC) to maintain high standards and accountability.

Every horse is different, so your farrier will consider factors including workload, surfaces worked on, clinical

history and hoof quality when making recommendations. They'll guide you and, if needed, suggest involving your vet. Getting help early gives your horse the best care.

Supporting healthy hooves

A balanced, high-forage diet supports healthy hoof growth. Adding a balancer to your horse's feed can make sure they get all the essential vitamins and minerals they need. Biotin (vitamin B7) helps strengthen hooves. Whole-horse health is key to strong hoof growth.

Maintaining fitness

The hooves help to circulate blood back up the leg, and movement boosts this circulation, supporting hoof growth. If your horse is housed/stabled, daily turnout and/or regular exercise is essential.

For more information, head to bhs.org.uk/hoof-care.

