

Lovell Equine Newsletter



American Association of Equine Practitioners

Lovell Equine Clinic
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An Ounce Of Prevention

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The Purpose of this newsletter is to demonstrate how before and after radiographs and a good veterinarian/farrier relationship can work together to prevent and treat lameness. With the acquisition of our Eklin Mark III digital radiography system we have seen a noticeable improvement and increase in lameness work at Lovell Equine Clinic. The almost instant (3-5 second) image capture time and the relative ease of use makes radiographing a horse's extremities relatively simple. See Welcome To the Digital Age (our February 2009 newsletter) at our website www.lovellequineclinic.com.

Corrective trimming and/or shoeing can be used to treat and even prevent many lameness issues of the feet and lower limb of the horse. Some of these include laminitis or founder, navicular syndrome, high or low ringbone (arthritis), tendon or ligament disorders, sore feet from lack of sole thickness, improper trimming or shoeing, and just general neglect of proper hoof care or having the farrier back in a timely fashion.

Many farriers are happy to view radiographs pre-or post-trimming or shoeing. Most hoof care symposiums now include viewing radiographs as part of their continuing education programs. Good farriers are eager to learn, and know that good radiographs can disclose many hidden or unknown problems. While it is not the farrier's job to diagnose lameness, when willingly working in conjunction with a veterinarian and a set of radiographs, they will be better

able to treat and prevent problems. Their clients are often happier with the end result and everyone benefits from the situation.

Large numbers of radiographs are not always needed for corrective trimming or shoeing. Once a lameness issue is diagnosed, often only one or two views of each affected foot are necessary to show how a horse can best be trimmed or shod. These include a lateral-medial projection (from the side), and an anterior-posterior projection (front to back). Some of the parameters interpreted from one or two views of a foot include:

- Sole Thickness
- Alignment of hoof/pastern axis
- Palmar angle
- Breakover placement
- Lamellar thickness
- Separation of hoof wall
- Medial to lateral balance.

Some of the conditions often recognized by one or two views of a foot include:

- Rotation of third phalanx (founder)
- Club feet
- Navicular disease
- Pedal Osteitis
- High or Low Ringbone (DJD)
- Sidebone
- Soft tissue infection (abscess)
- Foreign bodies

I will illustrate how radiographs can help prevent lameness by citing an example of my

own horse. About a month ago I noticed my riding mare had become slightly clumsy, would stumble occasionally, and her feet just didn't "look right." Though she was only 4-5 weeks post-shoeing, she almost looked overdue for a reset. After consulting with my farrier, he had also noticed her front feet had been changing shape over the summer. We decided to get a set of scout films.



As this lateral radiograph shows, her hoof/pastern axis was not aligned, her break over was too far forward, her palmar angle was near flat, and her shoe was not set full enough in the back. Though no pathology exists, abnormal forces are being placed on her coffin and pastern joints, her navicular region, and her weight bearing flexor structures. After reviewing and discussing this with my farrier, we settled on a corrective process and the mare was re-shod.



As this post-shoeing radiograph shows, we have achieved much better hoof pastern alignment, a more normal palmar

angle, much improved and enhanced breakover, and the weight bearing surface is moved back under the foot where it belongs. In addition to this, the horse was much happier and moved better. My farrier was thrilled to have the pre- and post-shoeing films and I, the client in this case, was grateful to have avoided having a lame friend, my mare Vesty. So the result was, the ounce of prevention was worth the pound of cure.

Hopefully, this newsletter will help you the horse owner to recognize the benefits of radiography when working with your farrier. Once taken a CD of the images can be burned to take to your farrier along with instructions or we can arrange a phone consult from our office. Post trimming or post-shoeing films show us if we accomplished what we wanted. If things aren't going like you want with your horses feet, don't hurry to get mad at your farriers. After all, they don't have X-Ray vision.

Lovell Equine Clinic is proud to announce the addition of a new Class IV Therapeutic Laser System. This new system is 20x stronger than any previous ones. The benefits of laser therapy are numerous but include an anti-inflammatory reaction, relief from pain, and an acceleration of the healing process.