



Mike Zerbe has been a full time farrier for 30 years, practicing 25 years in the same area and our personal farrier for 20 years. Working on 75 horses per week Mike has built a reputation on being able to resolve difficult cases and return horses to soundness.



Philosophy on Soundness

I started out as a horse trainer and attended shoeing school to learn how to communicate with my farriers.

As a trainer I always felt that horses should have proper cadence or rhythm. If a horse has to think about his feet he won't be paying attention to your direction as a rider.

My goal has always been to eliminate concussion and torque or 'twisting' in the horse's body. The end result has been sound horses for my clients.

I've applied this basic concept to all breeds and have gotten the same result.:

- **No navicular No ringbone No sidebone No injected hocks No sore suspensory tendons**

I have worked on horses that have been diagnosed with all of the above problems and have helped over 90% of them live comfortable useful lives.

I feel that most soundness problems have a minimum of three different treatment approaches. The trick is, which approach is right for your horse's problem.

BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS

When we ask a horse to surrender his feet we're asking him to give up his only defense - his ability to flee.

I don't believe in the 'hold onto to the foot at all cost' approach to teaching a horse to accept the farrier.

We will pick up the foot and then let go of it as quickly as possible. We repeat that step adding a few seconds each time we pick up the foot.

The horse figures out that surrendering his foot is not permanent. The horse should always stay within his comfort zone during the training period. A frightened horse cannot learn!

Horse leaps while being worked on: Most of the time these horses haven't learned they can take small steps while they have a foot up. We teach these horses that they can take a half a step in any direction.

Horse wants to sit while hind leg is being picked up: This happens when the farrier pushes his body against the gaskin/stifle area of the horse.

Horse doesn't like nailing: This usually is because the foot or the shoe are not level. When the second or third nail is being driven is usually when the horse reacts. This pinches the sole of the hoof causing pain.



NATURAL BALANCE

The Natural Balance shoe produced by Gene Overcheck has benefited many horses. Combined with Tony Gonzales's PBM (proper balance motion) philosophy and Rick Reden's 4 point trim system we find that together they can help horses stay comfortable, relieve stress and encourage a better attitude in your horse.

All three of these systems are different tools we've been given to help eliminate stress by easing the break over of the hoof in motion.

The confirmation of the horse is going to dictate if one of these tools (or a combination of these) is the appropriate approach for that particular animal.