

The Right Pick

Proper, daily hoof cleaning is the best way to spot potential hoof abscesses and to prevent foreign objects from becoming painfully lodged into your horse's feet.

By Christa Moody

Ideally, a horse's hoof should be cleaned and inspected every day. Cleaning hooves on a routine basis is good preventative medicine for horses. This improves the likelihood for hoof problems to be detected early. A hoof pick or fine-bristled wire brush can be used to clean the sole, frog, and hoof wall area.

1. Pick up the horse's foot and begin at the outer heel with the hoof pick making long, stroking motions towards the toe. hoof cleaning
2. Continue this stroking motion from the heel toward the toe while slowly moving inward toward the commissure.
3. Repeat these same motions on the opposite side of the hoof sole.
4. Once you have uncovered the sole, take special care in cleaning the commissure on each side of the frog and the cleft of the frog itself.

A nail, gravel, stick or other object unfortunately can work into the sole or frog area and cause lameness for a long time. Objects have been known to become lodged in a horse's hoof for as long as year before emerging at the heel or coronet band. These emerging objects cause a sore, called a quittor, and if left untreated can easily develop into a serious infection.

Seminole Feed Equine Nutrition Consultant Christa Moody lives in Providence, Florida, where she's conscientious in examining and cleaning her four horses' feet daily. In her non-equine spare time, Christa enjoys hunting, gardening and cooking.