

Corns

A corn is a bruise that forms between the sensitive and insensitive layers of the sole of the foot. The most common site affected is known as the 'seat of corn' which is located between the hoof bar and wall, near the heel.

Corns do not always cause a horse to be lame, if they do, the lameness is usually not severe. The front feet are most often affected.

Corns develop as a consequence of focal points of pressure, such as from the heel of a shoe as a poorly-fitting shoe presses on the sole. Poor conformation such as under-run heels or a poorly balanced foot with uneven loading across the heels, will also predispose the horse to develop corns.

The treatment of corns involves relieving the pressure from the affected area and the prevention of recurrence by altering the shoeing or trimming technique.

**CORN****PAIN ON HOOF TESTER
PRESSURE IN THE SEAT OF CORN**

CLINICAL SIGNS:

- mild to moderate usually forelimb lameness;
- increased strength of pulse to the foot (digital pulse);
- heat in the foot;
- pain on hoof tester pressure in the area of the seat of the corn.

Key Points

- Corns are bruises in the heel area of the sole of the foot that develop because of pressure points.
- The most common presenting feature is lameness of the affected limb; forelimbs are most commonly affected.
- Pain is seen when pressure is applied to the affected area and paring of the foot will often reveal a corn.
- 'Dry' corns appear as reddened areas whereas 'wet', infected corns release pus or serum when opened up.
- Poor conformation, shoeing and trimming are responsible for the development of corns.

TREATMENT

- The initial treatment of a corn is to relieve pressure on the affected area. During examination of the horse the vet or farrier will remove the shoe covering the corn and pare away the overlying horn.
- A 'dry' corn appears as a reddened area of sole where blood has leaked into the horn tubules.
- A wet corn has an accumulation of inflammatory fluid. If the area becomes infected, pus will be present and require draining. Often this process will immediately bring some relief to the horse.
- A dressing will then be applied to the foot to keep it clean - this may be a dry dressing or a poultice if any remaining fluid needs to be encouraged to come out.
- Your veterinary surgeon may advise you to box rest your horse during this process to rest the painful foot and protect it from becoming damaged without the shoe.
- Pain killer anti-inflammatory medication may also be dispensed at this time.
- Topical preparations are often used to encourage the tissues to harden in preparation for shoeing.
- When the time comes to re-shoe the horse it is essential to discuss how the development of further corns can be avoided. The feet must be trimmed to balance them and then shod to ensure focal points of pressure are not created, particularly over the seat of the corn.



WET CORN



**POOR FOOT CONFORMATION
PREDISPOSES THE HORSE TO
DEVELOP CORNS**



PARING OUT A CORN

Prevention

- Prevention of further corns developing is essential. The horse's conformation and movement should be examined by the veterinary surgeon and farrier to discuss how the balance of the feet and application of the shoes can be improved. The shape of the shoe may be altered to reduce the pressure over the corn (this type of shoe is known as 'seated-out'). Pads in between the sole of the foot and the shoe can help to spread pressure more evenly across the foot. A feed additive to improve hoof quality may be recommended.
- Attention should always be paid to the surfaces over which horses are exercised as hard, concussive going, such as roads, will increase the likelihood of developing corns.



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