

Taking Care of the Hooves



Clean feet, clean stalls, and good pasture are three priorities that will help prevent hoof problems. Wet soil, manure and unsanitary footing will quickly lead to hoof problems such as thrush, a decomposition of the hoof. Daily cleaning of the hooves prevents problems and alerts you to the first sign of a problem.

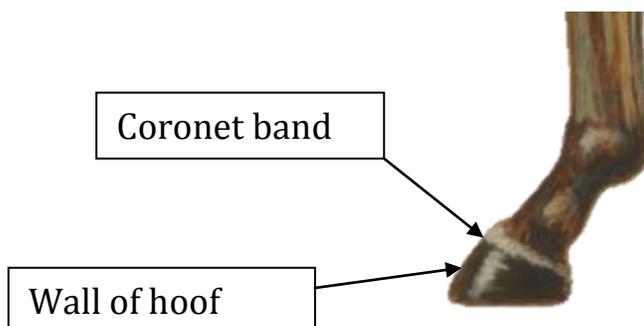
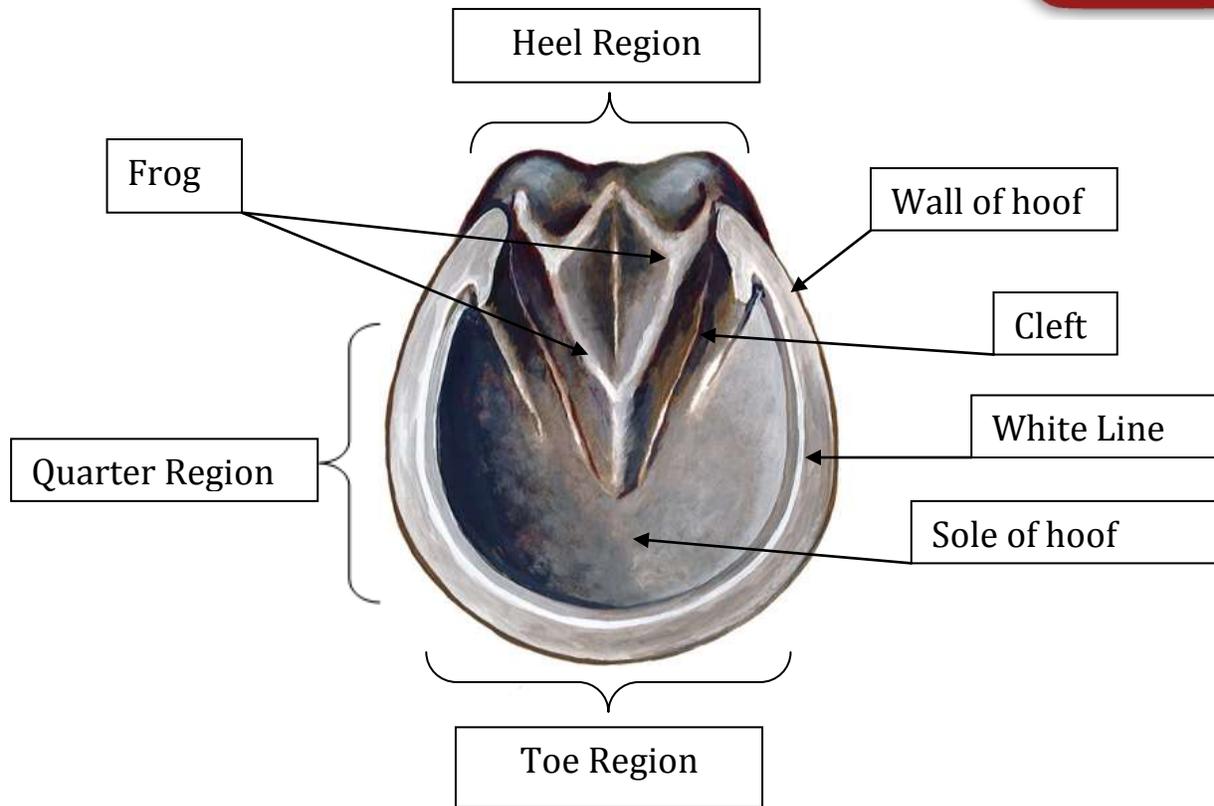
Cleaning the Hoof - Equipment Needed: Hoof pick

1. With the horse safely tied, either in the stall or on cross-ties, gently but firmly run your hand down the front leg to the hoof. Pick up the hoof, using the verbal command “Hoof” or “Pick it up”. You may wish to have an equine professional demonstrate this to you and tell you what verbal cue they use with the horse. It is important to be in a safe position.
2. Hold the foot in a secure and comfortable position with one hand. With your other hand, take the hoof pick and loosen the dirt with the point of the hoof pick pointing away from the heel of the hoof. Using downward swipes, remove all the dirt from the sole and out of the cleft of the frog.
3. If the horse is shod, scrape around the inside of the shoe to loosen all dirt along the edge. Pay attention to the heel area to remove any mud from under the back of the shoe.
4. Place the foot gently down on the ground. Do not drop the hoof. This can cause bruising of the hoof if it hits hard on concrete.
5. Some horses may need hoof dressings applied. Check with an equine professional before applying hoof dressings as not all horses will need them and there are many varieties available. Hoof dressings are usually applied by a brush, covering the entire wall of the hoof with the treatment.

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