

PONY CLUB



Care of the Foot Mini Achievement Badge Workbook



Objectives To have an understanding of the structure of a pony's foot, and how to take care of the feet

- Key points
- Recognise and point to 3 parts of the foot
 - Know how and why to use a hoof pick and skip bucket
 - Know how and why to apply hoof oil
 - Know if a pony is shod or unshod

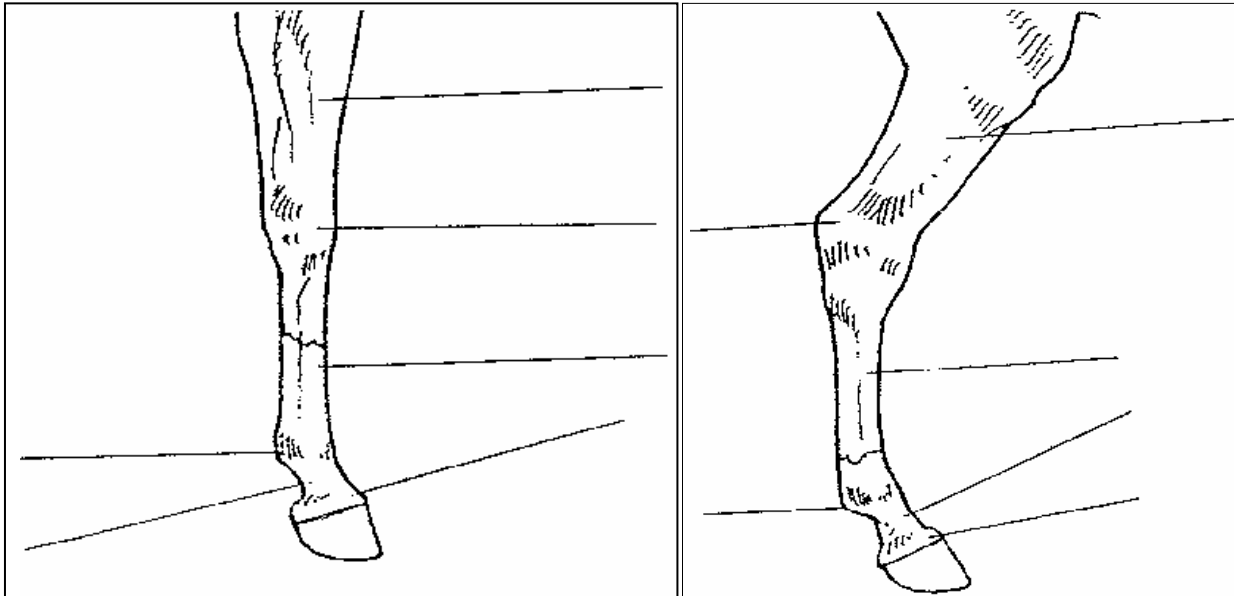
This workbook is an introduction to the subject that it covers. As it is addressed primarily to young children, it is important that the instructor must be prepared to demonstrate the subject practically, and allow the member to practice the skills as frequently as required. It is highly recommended that the parent or the instructor read or explain the contents of the workbook to the child as it cannot be assumed that the child is able to read the information or instructions sufficiently well to achieve understanding.

Name

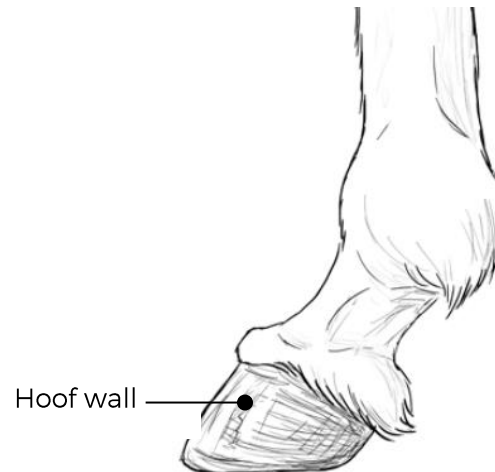
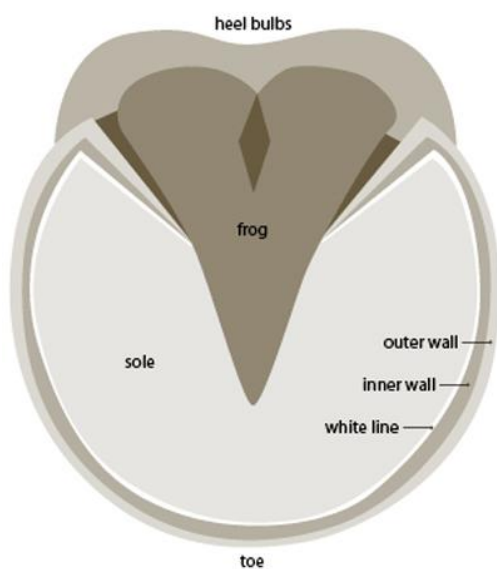
Branch

The foot of a horse is the hard section at the end of his legs, and is called a hoof. A pony's front legs look different to his back legs. If you look at these pictures, can you tell which is the front leg, and which the back leg?

- Colour in the hoof on the front leg in YELLOW
- Colour in the hoof on the back leg in RED



Recognise 3 parts of the foot



- The outer, horny shell part that you can see when his foot is on the ground is the hoof wall
- The section marked 'outer wall' and 'inner wall' is what you can see of the hoof wall, when you are looking from underneath the foot
- Find the big area marked 'sole'. The sole covers the whole of the bottom of the foot. Inside the hoof wall and protected by the sole are some bones, much like the toes of your foot, but you can't see them. The sole is not very thick for the protection work that it has to do,

so a pony can't walk over glass or sharp objects without hurting himself. If you wouldn't walk over something with bare feet, don't ask your pony to walk over it

- Between the wall and the sole is a thin line called the 'white line'
- The triangular shape that you see is called the frog. The shape of the frog and its rough surface compared to the rest of the sole helps the pony to not slip when walking, and you will feel that it is softer and spongier than the rest of the foot. This is because the frog acts like a shock absorber. Imagine if your pony was jumping, and only had the hard wall to land on. Just like you prefer jumping on a trampoline to jumping on hard cement, your pony is better off by having the frog in their foot!

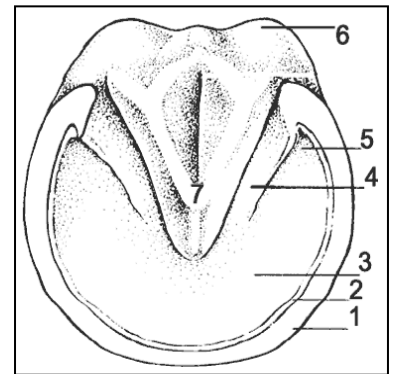
Look at the picture below. Now colour each part that you can identify.

The frog in **GREEN**

The sole in **BLUE**

The wall in **ORANGE**

Take care to leave the white line in **WHITE**



Care for your pony's foot

Because of the shape of the horse's foot underneath, dirt or stones can be trapped in the area around the frog. Trapped stones would be uncomfortable to walk on, and dirt left there too long could cause an infection. So to look after our pony's feet, we need to **clean them regularly**. We clean them by picking them out with a hoof pick.

In the picture, find the tool you would use to pick out feet and circle/colour it in **BLUE** (There might be more than one 😊)

Circle/colour in the items you would use on your pony's feet to stop them from getting dry and cracked, in **RED**.



Why do we pick out our ponies' hooves?

- To remove any dirt or stones that may have become trapped in the area around the frog
- To check and see that our pony has no infections like thrush. You will know if they have thrush, because there will be a terrible smell coming from the foot. Tell your farrier or an adult if you notice the smell

How often should we pick out our ponies' hooves?

Every day, particularly before and after you ride in case your pony has picked up a stone.

How to use a hoof pick safely and correctly

Always use the hoof pick in the direction **away from the frog**. You will be working downwards, from your pony's heel towards the toe. This also means away from you so you don't injure yourself.



Why do we use a skip bucket when picking out feet?

- The skip is used to collect all the sand, mud and any stones that you may pick out of the foot
- This makes sure that the yard is kept tidy and no stones are left lying around to cause a problem for another horse

How to pick up a horse's foot (front leg)

This activity must be assisted

- Make sure your pony is securely tied up using a quick release knot
- Have your hoof pick ready to use
- Stand facing the back of your pony's near front leg
- Put your inside hand on your pony's shoulder
- Run your outside hand down your pony's leg
- When you get to the pastern you can squeeze gently and your pony should lift up their leg
- When the leg is lifted, hold it securely with your inside hand while your outside hand uses the hoof pick to gently remove dirt from the hoof particularly around the frog
- Use the point of the hoof pick to ease out anything lodged in the foot. By working away from the frog you won't run the risk of making a hole in the softer parts of the frog

- Clean out the hollow sections on either side of the frog. This is where they may get thrush, so make sure there is no smell! Tell your farrier or an adult if there is, so it can be treated
- If your hoof pick has a brush built in, you can use this to brush the last bits of dirt off your pony's foot and into the skip

Know how and why to apply hoof oil

Why do we need to apply hoof oil to our pony's feet?

- Hoof oil helps to improve the condition and appearance of your pony's hooves especially if they are dry and brittle
- They make your pony's hooves shiny and clean
- When ponies go to shows they look really well turned out when their hooves are freshly oiled or blackened

When to use hoof oil?

You would oil your pony's feet more often in winter

How to use hoof oil?

You usually 'paint' the hoof oil onto the hoof with a paint brush. Don't forget to put oil under the foot as well.

Colour in on this picture where you would put the hoof oil



Know if a pony is shod or unshod

Some ponies have sensitive feet. This is probably because their soles are thinner than average. This makes it uncomfortable for them to walk over rough ground. We can then put shoes on a pony, to make them more comfortable or protect the hoof wall from cracking too much. Can you tell if a pony is shod (wears shoes) or is unshod (no shoes or barefoot)?

On the pictures below:

- Write **YES (in green)** on the hooves with shoes
- Write **NO (in red)** on the hooves without shoes

