

Hoof Crack? Fill 'er Up

It can open the door for real problems.

Let's start by getting a few facts out in the open right away:

1) This article is not meant to replace your farrier.

2) All the patches in the world won't fix poor-hoof quality due to inadequate nutrition (see May 2009 issue) or a bad farrier.

3) Bad hooves due to the horse's genetics will always require a Band-Aid of some type.

4) Ignoring little cracks and chips may lead to big trouble.

A healthy, well-fed horse's hoof isn't likely to develop cracks or chips, unless there's an underlying reason. We all know there are a nearly infinite number of ways this can happen, but the most likely culprits include:

✓ Poor farrier care, resulting in flares, under-run heels and an overall poorly balanced hoof or waiting too long between trims.

✓ Poor management that leaves the horse standing in manure or doesn't provide adequate exercise.

✓ Constant work over rocky footing or hard surfaces.

✓ Excessive pawing.

Like your farrier, you can use a hoof sealer/hardener (see March 2010) or hoof dressing (January 2010) to help protect the hoof and trap internal moisture so the



Notching had not stopped the crack from worsening, so we decided to try filling it with SBS Crack Filler.

damaged portions can grow out. (Remember it takes nine months to a year for a hoof to completely regrow, so this is no short process.) We've included in our favorites box on this page the products we know are effective.

However, there's another one on the market that we think offers even more for hoof cracks: The SBS Crack Filler Kit.

It's not new, but few of us actually use it, and it's not clear why. The Crack Filler Kit is ridiculously easy to use and effective.

We used it on a horse that arrived in our barn with a nasty front-hoof crack, running right up the middle of her hoof. We immediately started her on a good supplement, of course, and we got our farrier to trim her.

He was able to cut away most, but not all, of the crack. However, we found that as long as any of that crack remained, the area continued to worsen, probably because of the natural movement of the hoof when the horse moved.

Shoeing with clips was an option,



**Horse Journal's
FAVORITES**

Hoof Dressings

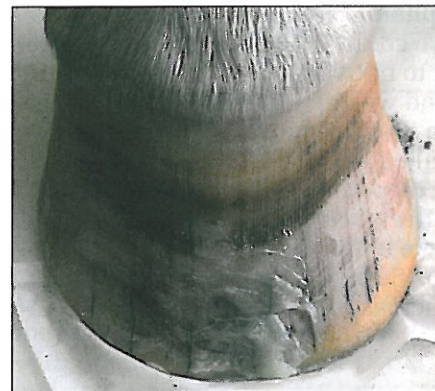
- ★ **Animal Legends Equine Hoof Dressing** (Animal Legends)
- ★ **EquiLife Solution4Feet** (Emerald Valley Health)
- ★ **Hoof Heal** (Cut Heal)
- ★ **Hooflex** (Absorbine)
- ★ **Rainmaker** (Farnam)
- ★ **Sole Pack Dressing** (Hawthorne)

Hoof Hardeners

- ★ **Cavalor Dry Feet** (Farm Vet)
- ★ **Keratex Hoof Hardener** (Keratex)

Hoof Sealers

- ★ **Farrier's Hoof Sealant** (SBS)
- ★ **Keratex Hoof Gel** (Keratex)



Top photo, we filled the crack with filler then let it dry thoroughly until the fill was solid. The bottom photo shows the hoof after rasping away some of the excess filler but before final trim.

as that provides the stability and support the hoof needs to keep a crack from worsening, but we really didn't want to shoe. Although we weren't certain we could keep crack-filler material on the hoof without a shoe, we decided to give it a try.

The kit consists of two tubes with resins that adhere to the hoof extremely well. You mix them just before you decide it's time to use them. You do have to be sure that the crack is completely clean—no dirt or any loose material—which we achieved by washing it clean, then applying a little acetone to remove any residue.

Since our crack was wide, we initially filled it with filler, then placed mesh (also in the kit) over that and finished by spreading more filler over the mesh. We waited a little longer than the recommended 10 minutes to ensure the filler was completely dry. We then rasped the fill until it was smooth.

It stayed in the crack extremely well, and we repeated the procedure after the next trim (one kit lasted us for almost two repairs). That was six months ago, and the crack is now nearly gone.

BOTTOM LINE. The SBS Crack Filler Kit (www.sbsequine.com, 239-354-3361) is a simple, easy-to-use spot treatment for hoof cracks. It helps restore the integrity of the hoof, and it requires no special training to use, except to follow the instructions, especially for preparing the hoof. At \$20 a kit, it's well worth the cost. Depending upon the size of the area you're treating, you could get four repairs per kit. Shelf life is about one year, if stored at 70° F. Refrigeration will extend its life even further. [E]

Article by Contributing Editor Lee Foley.

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Just For Fun: DIY Bling

Koper's Dots are simple, fun and ingenious.

Remember when your only choice for a bell boot was to wrestle the rubber bugger on over the horse's hoof? Then some brilliant person came up with the idea of putting closures on them, so you only needed the pull-ons for particular situations.

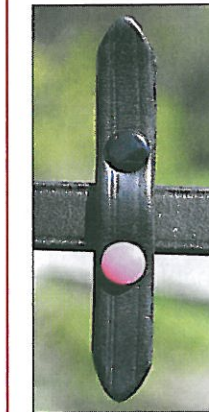
Well, Koper Equine has come up with a similar solution to rein-stops, the long pieces on your reins that stop running-martingale rings from getting caught on the bit buckles. Instead of either purchasing reins with matching stops sewn on them or pulling on the rubber ones you can buy, you can simply use Easy-On Reins Stops. They connect and disconnect with Chicago screws.

Chicago screws, also known as screw posts, have long been used on Western bridles to hold the reins to the bit and the cheek pieces to the bit (see photo of Chicago screw). They're also used to attach a breakaway leather fuse to turnout halters.

The only tool you need to attach them is a straight screwdriver, although some people have trouble keeping the flat end of the screw still while screwing the post in. If that's the case, grab something grippy—like a flat rubber jar gripper—and press it against the end to keep it still while you screw the pieces together.

Koper offers many color choices for the dots, from leather-matching colors to flat colors to metallic or even jeweled choices, and four leather colors. \$19.95 for reins stops. Additional dots are sold in pairs at \$2 to \$3.25. www.koperequine.com, 803-420-6040. [E]

Article by Lee Foley, Contributing Editor.



Koper's Dots make rein stops an easy-on, easy-off piece of tack (you can use leather-matching or colored dots).

More Dot Uses

With a hole punch and some of the spare dots, you can add inexpensive bling to your tack (see browband photo). We also used the dots to identify tack, such as Dobbin's bridle has a blue dot on it or Red's halter has a red dot on it or use the shank with the pink dot. These dots are inexpensive, simple and fun.



We easily added inexpensive bling to our browband with the dots (these are 4 for \$3.25).