

# NATURAL HOOF PRINTS

Volume 1, Issue 2



EQUINE  
DIGIT  
SUPPORT  
SYSTEM,  
INC.

**“If they can  
get you  
asking the  
wrong  
questions,  
they don’t  
have to  
worry about  
the  
answer.”**

**-Thomas  
Pynchon**

## ***Just My Opinion***

**F**rom time to time I (Cody Ovnicek) may write an article or two about some of my own observations or opinions dealing with the business aspect of Equine Digit Support System, Inc. Keep in mind, these are just some of my own opinions. If anyone has more to add or would like to comment on my opinions or have some of your own, please let me know.

After 3 years of working full time with EDSS, Inc. I have heard numerous comments, criticisms and accusations. Now anyone who knows business understands that this is all part of doing business. Everyone is entitled to their opinion. However, over the last few years as we have grown more widely known, the comments become more abundant, usually from those who have vested interests in something contrary to our product, research or guidelines. Again, this is expected. We

have listened to the criticisms, taken the comments as learning opportunities and gone on about our business. However, the one thing that I have seen in common from every single letter, article or quote made in opposition to the EDSS, NBS or Natural Balance Principles have been made by people who have never used our system or guidelines. Most have never read our literature or seen our videos (other than our promo video perhaps). None have ever talked directly to Gene or been to a clinic. From this, I can assume only a few things. Either these people have seen what they think are similar ideas or products and haven’t had luck with them, or are formulating some bold statements based on what others have told them or what they hear through the grapevine. Knowing that it is generally human nature to mock what we don’t understand, I can accept the accusations and criticisms. I feel it is not my place to slander those who are speaking from the best of their knowledge. However, I would like to take every opportunity to challenge those people to make an effort to research, learn and gain some experience with something before they preach against it. For people who know the subject well, these comments seem absurd and lacking in credibility.

There is usually one aspect of any business, industry or

group that is less than pleasant. This is the fact that people are quick to judge, mock or criticize most anything, before they have any knowledge or experience with it. People read one article about some new technique someone is using and for the most part say “No way!! It’ll never work!” This comes before any sort of experience or adequate knowledge can be obtained. Personally, I put most of the stress on the experience aspect of the tool, information or procedure. I feel that until someone has experienced the success or failure of doing something, they lack the edge that gives them credibility to speak for or against the product or information. I believe it was Montaigne who said, “We can be knowledgeable with other men’s knowledge, but we cannot be wise with other men’s wisdom.” As many people know, wisdom comes with experience. Although it would be nice to live another person’s experiences so you too can become more wise, it just doesn’t happen that way. This is the very reason we so highly encourage people to share their experiences or findings with us and everyone else. Although we cannot re-live those experiences, we can gain some knowledge so that when we do have our own experiences with such things, our learning process will come much easier and clearer. Many heads working together are far better than one.

I would like to thank all of those who have taken the time and put forth the effort to become familiar with a wide variety of products, procedures and information. The more useful tools one becomes proficient with, the better

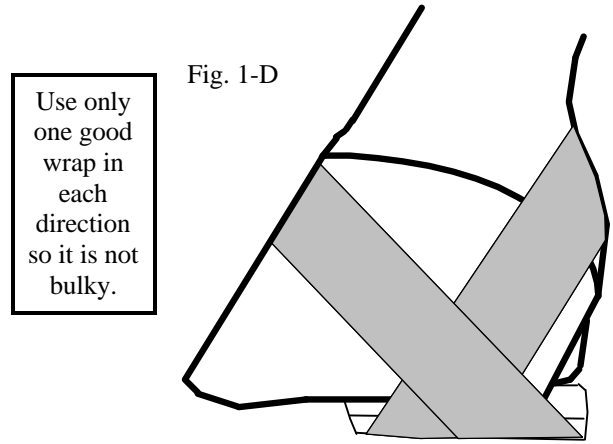
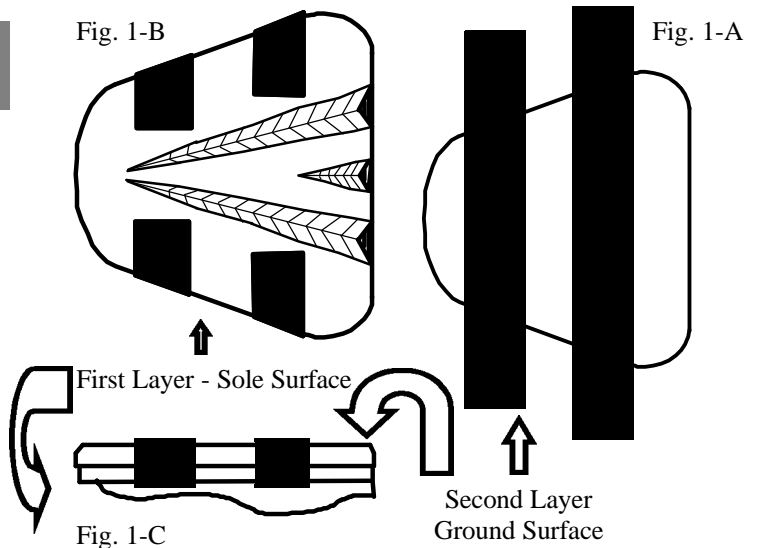
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# STYROFOAM

As we are constantly looking to improve our techniques, procedures and efficiency when treating laminitis, we find that long term use or care in the Styrofoam support blocks gives us the edge we need to bridge the gap-struggling set backs to achieve a higher level of success. As we mention in the EDSS Instruction Tape and other printed materials, it is very important to be patient in the Styrofoam phase of the treatment. Those afflicted with acute laminitis frequently need 3 or 4 compressed, trimmed layers applied to the caudal sole surface of the foot. The horse is usually more comfortable and quite ambulatory with the 2nd and 3rd layer. However, keeping these compressed portions in place can be a problem for some horses. Suggestions have come to us from users of the EDSS Styrofoam support blocks to help keep the 3 or 4 layers in place as the horse continues to stabilize and become more active.

As we have mentioned before, the first compression layer is the most important because it makes an identical mold of the sole surface of the foot. We ask that you preserve this piece regardless of how much it becomes compressed. This layer closest to the foot will eventually compress to a thickness similar to cardboard and may even break in two. Never the less, it is still important to place this layer back in the foot first, just the way it came out. If you lose the first layer, don't try to replace it with the second layer. The second layer is generally very hard and will not conform to the sole surface comfortably. The sensitive sole surface has become dependent on the shape of the first layer and anything but a new block would simulate a rock inside your shoe. Therefore, to help preserve the original first layer, you should tape the first two compressions together as soon as possible (Fig. 1-C). Place two pieces of duct tape across the ground surface of the second compressed, trimmed piece (Fig 1-A). Leave only enough tape beyond the second layer's edge to fold over the edge of the first compressed layer when they are stacked on top of each other (as they came off the foot). Be sure that the tape does not extend over the ridges created by the frog commissures (Fig 1-B). It's very important to not interfere with the future molding process of the foam support piece. Once the two pieces are attached together, place them back in the foot and secure them with duct tape or Elasticon. Try not to use a lot of tape, however you must get one wrap over the bulbs of the heels (Fig. 1-D). You can repeat this procedure with each compressed, trimmed piece until you have a firm thickness that insures protection over the tip of P3. The final attachment of the stacks of compressed layers is done with 3" Elasticon. Make sure you get 2 good wraps over the bulbs of the heels. It generally



takes one role to secure it adequately. The patient is usually quite active and turns reasonably well. If they are still dependent on drugs to help them move and turn willingly, you need to keep them in these stacked layers until they are not drug dependent. We encourage communication with your vet in an effort to reduce pain altering drugs as quickly as possible. Many important factors are to be considered, so the attending veterinarian has the final say in these matters. Give the patient an extra week or so after he has been without help from drugs before you shoe him with the EDSS (Please be patient!). You will not be disappointed with the progress you will see later in the treatment if you follow this procedure. The fragile state of the acute condition is still present.

Now we need to

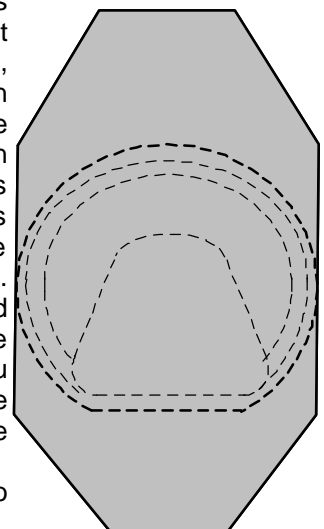
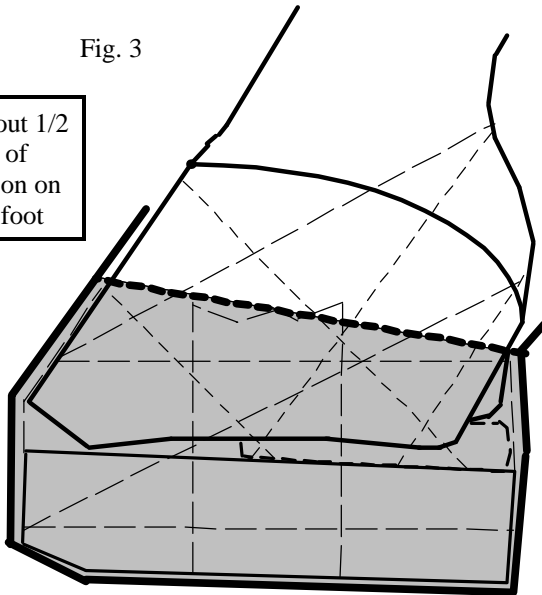


Fig. 2

Fig. 3

Use about 1/2 roll of Elasticon on each foot



protect the ground surface of the stacked, trimmed layers due to the usual increase of activity of the patient. To protect the stacks of Styrofoam so that the horse can move around and get the blood circulating, we need to cover it with something that can withstand the environment and activity. One method proving to be successful is the use of a medium weight inner-tube. To apply this rubber boot, simply cut a single layer of medium weight inner-tube, the width of the ground surface of the taped foot. The rubber should be 3" longer than the toe, and 3" longer past the heel (Fig 2). Taper each end so it will not wrinkle the corners when you fold up each end as you tape it on. The added length of the end tabs will be handy for one person to hold the rubber tight while someone else wraps 3" Elasticon around the foot (fig 3). Approximately 1" of the Elasticon should be allowed to extend beyond the edge of the ground surface so as the Elasticon is pulled tight it will roll over the ground surface of the rubber protective surface to help secure it to the foot. This boot should help preserve and protect the Styrofoam through this critical treatment stage.

We thank you (and the horse thanks you) for your suggestions to minimize and simplify the treatment of laminitis. Please keep your questions, concerns and

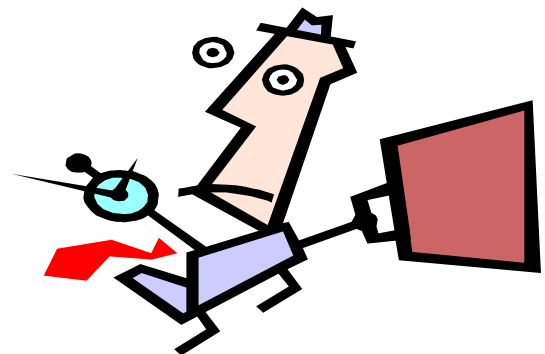
book will also be a very helpful tool for people experienced with these principles to carry as a reference. The book itself consists of several parts. The first part is an overview of the Wild Horse Research project done by Gene in 1986 and 1987. This section goes into procedures, results and conclusions derived from the compiled data. The next section is especially helpful for horse owners, because we talk about the steps we go through to determine whether a horse has hoof deformities or not. Many people can use these guidelines to remedy minor hoof deformities before they become pathological. The three final sections consist of a Natural Balance Trimming overview with guidelines and illustrations, plus a Natural Balance Shoe application section and finally an EDSS overview with case study results and conclusions from a 2 year study done from 1993 to 1995. Every section of the book is supported with illustrations for more comprehensive understanding. There is something for everyone in this book and we think it will be a very useful tool for any farrier, veterinarian or horse owner.

Another fairly recent development of EDSS, Inc. has been the addition of a 1-Day Clinic format offered for horse owners, farriers and vets. This new format is a comprehensive introduction to the Wild Horse Research and to the Natural Balance Principles. The events of this clinic consist of: basic anatomy and physiology, wild horse research findings, wild horse and domestic horse hoof comparisons, self-servicing the needs of the equine foot, recognizing and treating hoof deformities, and demonstrations of Natural Balance trimming and shoe application. The price of the 1-Day clinics are around \$40 for the day. We supply the sponsor with the advertising materials and do what we can to help promote each one in every area. If you would like to sponsor one or would like more information about the 1-Day Clinics, please call us at (406) 892-2977.

The final note I would like to add, deals with the continuation of the "Unsolved Mysteries of Hoof Preparation" article in the last edition of NATURAL HOOF PRINTS. We are still working on that article and will have it ready for the next issue of the newsletter. If anyone would like to see any other article expanded upon or have a request for more information on a certain topic, please let us know. We would be happy to respond to your personal interests.

## WHAT'S NEW?

I would first like to thank everyone for their patients with this newsletter. We are currently in the process of updating much of our printed information which has taken up a lot of our time. The main project we have been working on is a short book that will be very helpful for people wanting an introduction to the Natural Balance Principles, the Wild Horse Research project and/or the Equine Digit Support System. This



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### CONTINUING EDUCATION IN

Over the last 10 years or so we have made a point to share what we have learned and continue to learn with as many people as possible. We feel that the Natural Balance Principles that we subscribe to are a very worthwhile contribution. We would like to commend everyone who has invested the time and effort into the expansion of their knowledge and wisdom in this area of study.

For the first time, to our knowledge, the Natural Balance Principles have been taught in an organized classroom situation. The farrier students at Walla Walla Community College in Washington state have had several weeks of Natural Balance study. Mark Plumlee of Walla Walla has done an exceptional job passing on knowledge and instructing a subject he is more than qualified to teach. Mark is currently one of the most knowledgeable and experienced farriers

with the Natural Balance Principles. He is an excellent instructor and hoofcare practitioner. This first farrier class to be taught these principles have responded very well and are very excited about expanding their own knowledge and wisdom on providing horses with good, sound hoofcare practices. Congratulations Walla Walla Community College!

