EPC Solutions offered an intense four-day workshop July 21-24, sharing Advanced Concepts in Equine Podiatry and Therapeutic Farriery. It was held at Deepwood Veterinary Clinic in Centreville, Virginia led by clinicians Dr. M.W. "Tookie" Myers, D.V.M, Farrier and Sylvia Kornherr, Equine Podiatry Technologist, Nutritionist. This workshop shared over 50+ years of combined experience working in the field of equine podiatry.

"We wanted to share a unique experience including lectures, case studies and live-horse podiatry demonstrations from a combined perspective of veterinary medicine, farriery, nutrition and in-house studies that have brought us where we are today in hoof care."

Horses were kindly donated to the workshop over the four days from local barns and the United States Park Police courtesy of Arvin Reynolds, staff farrier and Marlea Sabaté, Instructor, USPP. Local farriers kindly supported the workshop with their personal assistance and use of their clients' horses.

Each morning began with detailed podiatry theory followed by case history review and investigative study of the live horse cases that followed in the afternoon. Pre-trim radiographs and photos were reviewed for a plan to be devised. X-rays were taken post-trim and post-shoeing to show the progress made through each stage of the farrier plan.
The workshop explained 8 common hoof type distortions seen in the field today followed up with demonstrations on live-horse cases to show how to address each type moving from classroom theory to practical farriery.

Test your evaluation skills...
how do the three phalangeals orient inside these hoof capsules?

"It's a really good baseline to launch from. We have been teaching this concept in our student farrier programs and see good success in better evaluating hooves in the field. These are pretty accurate guidelines but are not meant as a one-size-fits-all, rather, just one of many tools to enhance our assessment skills and recognize important differences in how we support the hooves we work with every day".

We threw in a little amicable competition to kick our "A" Type Personalities into full gear! Talk about FOCUS!

On the final day of the workshop we put theory into practice. Understanding different hoof distortions and corresponding trimming and shoeing protocols to assist, we created two teams. Sole and lateral hoof mapping was demonstrated as was assessing sole depth visually. The class was then divided into two teams to hoof map to find COR, distal tip of P3 and pillar location with each team assigned one hoof case.

Each team filled out a test card describing the hoof type they were dealing with, commissure depth readings to estimate sole depth, and other hoof capsule distortion observations. A trimming/shoeing plan was then devised by each team estimating internal parameters, bony column and coffin bone orientation using what was taught without x-ray info.

Podiatry x-rays were taken and compared to the visual assessments recorded by the teams. Both teams' mapping of COR, distal tip of P3 and pillar locations were amazingly accurate when compared to x-rays as was sole depth and hoof type distortion.

Anxiously awaiting x-ray metron results for comparison...
In cases where therapeutic assists were required, numerous packages were demonstrated; casting with a roller shoe for a chronic laminitic case with P3 rotation, cup shoe and wedge pad combined with a roller shoe for a poorly connected long-toe under-run heel case. Significant gains in palmar angle on migrated and negative PA's were demonstrated in the trim by removing sole from the quarter to toe region while still leaving adequate sole support using a 2-plane trim, 3-plane with toe roll.

Understanding sole depth using commissure depth readings is critical before removing sole quarter-to-toe to align negative palmar angles. Podiatry x-rays take the guesswork out of trimming parameters, but this is a good visual back-up protocol tool. Cleaning out collateral grooves until the dirt line disappears in the valley of the groove assures an accurate measurement.

Using Pete Ramey's method, we found the toe commissure depths near the "dot" to be deeper than average range while commissure depths near the heel in the deepest caudal recesses of the grooves were slightly under average depth.

We removed sole to just above nail holes (green trim line) with no heel lowering. There remains some heel integrity in this case so the beauty in this technique is that caudal inflammation will resolve and heel tubules will relax and move back substantially with little to no heel address in future trim cycles, improving base of support without losing PA to get there. Commonly heels are rasped back/lowered without enough toe address and PA gain is not achieved.
A whole day was geared to various grades of laminitis and founder cases. Podiatry x-ray protocol was explained in detail showing farriers how to use radiographs to help them in their farrier plan which is critical together with venograms for laminitic cases. Veterinarians honed their skills to take accurate, level radiographs with defined markers specifically for podiatry. Dr. Myers demonstrated venogram technique and how to evaluate the results.

**Assessing Laminitis and Founder**

A: Reverse rotation/caudal lamellar failure (grave)  
B: Lamellar stretching & tearing/lamellar wedge (capsular rotation)  
C: Coffin bone rotation, lamellar wedge, possible sole penetration with P3 Tip  
D: Listing, one side of coffin bone drops  
E: Sinker, complete lamellar fail

Bone angle measurement should remain constant across repeatable x-rays of the same foot so that one can accurately assess changes in palmar angle and hoof angle. Taking baseline radiographs to establish bony column alignment parameters becomes a very useful tool to gauge subtle or large changes to the hoof down the road. Existing pathology can be ruled out in comparison to newly found pathology.
Understanding the internal orientation of the bones makes a big difference in our farrier plan knowing where we can trim in a correction towards bony column alignment and knowing where to fit the shoe to support pillars, not setting the shoe too far forward or too far back.

X-RAY BEAM POSITIONING FOR PODIATRY RADIOGRAPHS
Effects of bony column alignment and related distance between COR and toe

Figure 4
- Lamellar wedge
- Normal/Aligned

Figure 5
- Upright

Figure 6
- Migrated
- Negative PA

Distances measured are non-standard and are for illustration purposes only

a) normal hoof - (for illustration purposes) shown with 65mm distance from P3 x-ray beam crosshair to toe
b) lamellar wedge - distance from toe to crosshair increased to 80 mm
c) upright hoof - distance from toe to crosshair decreased to 50 mm
d) migrated hoof - distance from toe to crosshair increased to 90 mm
e) bullnosed/negative PA hoof - distance from toe to center of P3 decreased to 60 mm

Understanding the internal orientation of the bones is paramount to gain useful data from podiatry radiographs. The workshop explained how the beam should be aimed at the center of the coffin bone mass along its distal margin. This allows for minimal distortion for accurate measurements of soft and hard tissues within the window applicable for farrier purposes. Understanding the hoof type distortion involved allows the veterinarian to better estimate this location.
The clinic has not only helped me to understand more about hoof pathology and how to read the hooves correctly but also taught me about good shoeing. Now I understand where I was going wrong with my trimming and how I can improve it! There were moments where I finally understood why I am not getting the results I was hoping for. It was like pieces of a puzzle were falling in place.

I hope more barefoot trimmers will attend your clinics to improve their understanding of hooves. It definitely improved mine!

Jana Pepin, Certified PHCP practitioner

"The course really solidified for me the importance of corrective and balanced farriery. The principles are clear and easy to understand based on the biomechanics of the horse and the hoof. I think a lot of lameness and poor performance issues could be fixed or managed better with these principles on board". Sabine Ware, Veterinarian at Simply Horses Vet Clinic, Durham, UK.

Dr. Ware also flew in to attend the workshop. She recently moved to the UK from her Australian home base. She remarked that this clinic was a deciding point for her; she definitely plans to pursue her interests in farriery to compliment her focus on equine lameness in her practice.

Dr. Kate Thompson, Southeastern Equine Hospital in Australia surprised everyone with her farrier abilities banging out an excellent cup shoe! Dr. Thompson's clinic has a keen interest in podiatry and lameness focus and has just recently hired their first in-house staff farrier.

An interesting dynamic took place with this very close knit group that shared common lunches and dinners together and after hour discussions.

Of particular note was how Jana Pepin, a certified trimmer from South Africa found the workshop so welcoming and educational.

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A very special thanks to Martin Kenny, CJF, APF, Hoof Redevelopment Center, NC, who joined us on our final day to present a very informative talk about his cup shoe technique and his findings of nailing shoes at or behind ROE to reduce forward toe migration.

Martin's cup shoe technique demonstrated how trimming the edge of the hoof wall to angle into a shoe that is cupped created better stability and the overall package reduced over-flexion of poor-quality walls.
"For sure it was a great review for me, I took about 15 pages of notes. I got some good anvil tricks watching Tookie and Martin. Got a better understanding of trimming the club foot. Got that A-HA moment about finding high spots. And it was good to work with Martin on the cup shoe and get a better understanding of how to discuss with clients about not nailing ahead of ROE."

Thank you to all the participants, to their open mindedness, passion for the craft and their professionalism in working together regardless of individual level of expertise or background.

"Attending a summer clinic for a farrier is a risky decision that comes with many consequences the week before and after but it was more than worth it. I can truly say this was the best educational event I have been to on the whole. So many topics were covered, with great practical afternoon sessions everyday exemplifying our in depth theoretical discussions."

"One of the best group dynamics I have ever had the pleasure of being part of."

Carmen Theobald, T&T Farrier Services, ON, Canada