

Boots & Pads Tips & Tricks

With a very rare exception, I will fit your horse with boots and pads the day I pull shoes. You may find that you never need to use them, or you may find that they are a necessary part of the shod-to-barefoot transition.

At any time, if the horse moves more comfortably with the boots and pads than without them, you should use them. It is critical that the pads are used with the boots; without the pads, the hard, flat surface of the inside of the boot acts as a peripheral loading device, and only the hoof wall carries the weight of the horse, much like a horse shoe. Pressure and release to the sole of the foot and the frog are essential to proper hoof function, and therefore pads are essential.

Keeping boots clean, fresh, and in good operating condition prevents rubbing and prolongs the life of the boots and pads.

Boots and pads can be hosed off in the washrack. Be sure to take the pads out of the boots and thoroughly clean both the inside of the boot and the pad. Let both dry thoroughly before using.

Once dry, sprinkle the inside of the boot with a little Gold Bond Foot Powder to freshen the boot, discourage bacteria and fungus, and also to help the boot slip easily over the heel bulbs.

To keep the wires in Epics sliding freely, spray the "loop" ends inside the boot with a little WD40.

It's a good idea to buy a spare set of pads; when one pair looks very flattened, pull them out and put in the new ones, but don't throw away the old ones just yet! Put them aside for a few days, and they regain their sponginess. If the pads become torn or have holes in them, they do need to be replaced. Cleaning sand, dirt and grit out of the boots after every use preserves the life of the pads.

Most of the parts on the EasyBoots are replaceable and inexpensive. The neoprene and velcro gaiters are usually the first thing to succumb to 1200 lbs of horse, but don't despair! I keep plenty in stock. You can order them [HERE](#) or give me a call and I'll bring whatever you need on my next visit.

Preventing rubbing to the hoof wall or heel bulbs

If the tongue of the boot (plastic piece that comes up across the toe/dorsal wall) comes up too close to the coronary band, it can be trimmed back with a pair of scissors. Likewise, if the tongue rubs the wall excessively.

Heel bulb rubbing/irritation can be mitigated several ways. Try a single layer of vet wrap around the affected area, zinc oxide ointment (diaper ointment), or slide a tube sock or a ladies' knee high stocking over the hoof before putting the boot on.