

CREATE A *Free* ACCOUNT
ON THEHORSE.COM

Get these
Benefits

✉ Newsletters
📄 Special Reports
📺 Videos & Slideshows
❤ Save your Favorites

› [Anatomy & Physiology](#) ›

A Nail in the Hoof: What Would You Do?

By World Equine Veterinary Association • Aug 04, 2014 • Article #34294



Photo: Harry Werner, VMD

**By Harry Werner, VMD,
WEVA Board Member**

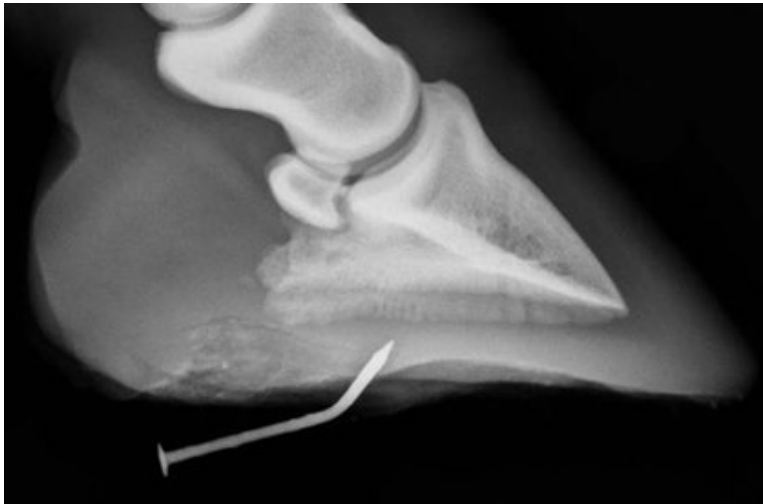
After your horse limps into the barn from turnout, you closely examine his lame leg. When you find the head of a nail protruding from the frog, you carefully place the foot down and plan your next move. Anxious to eliminate the cause of his pain, you grab pliers, yank the nail out of his frog, and sweep the floor clean of it and all other debris that could do more harm. You clean the foot and begin a soak in warm Epsom salts

solution as you place a call to your veterinarian.

You have wisely arranged to have a veterinarian examine the wound immediately rather than risk the possible consequences of a delay, ranging from infection to internal structure damage. But during the veterinary exam, while your veterinarian applauds your prompt treatment and

reporting of the injury, he suggests you might have taken a slightly different course of action. What might you have done?

Next time, if you know your veterinarian is available to examine the horse immediately, leave the nail in place. This will allow him or her to see the exact location of the wound's entry site and obtain radiographic visualization of the nail's location within the hoof capsule.



If possible, leave the nail in place so your veterinarian can obtain radiographs to check for internal damage.

Photo: Harry Werner, VMD

If timely veterinary help is unavailable and you must remove the nail, carefully note how much of the nail penetrated the foot, exactly where on the foot the penetration occurred, and at what angle. And before you remove the nail and if possible, take photos from a variety of angles to show your veterinarian when he or she arrives. Also, save the nail for your veterinarian to see.

Penetrating hoof wounds can be extremely serious, causing infection and direct trauma to vital structures. Knowing a wound tract's depth and direction can help your veterinarian assess structural damage, choose the best diagnostic imaging study, provide appropriate on-site treatment, and prescribe the proper aftercare.

Seek the advice of a qualified veterinarian before proceeding with any diagnosis, treatment, or therapy.

Copyright © 2014 BLOOD-HORSE PUBLICATIONS. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part in any form or medium without written permission of BLOOD-HORSE PUBLICATIONS is prohibited. THE HORSE, THE HORSE logo, THEHORSE.COM and THEHORSE.COM logo are trademarks of BLOOD-HORSE PUBLICATIONS.