

MNFA Close or Hot Nail

What does your vet and farrier mean when they talk about a horse having a close or hot nail?

Normally, when a horse is shod, the horseshoe nails are driven into the white line (insensitive laminae) or the junction of the white line and the hoof wall. These areas are extremely close to the sensitive structures. If the farrier just nails through the hoof wall, splitting of the wall usually will occur. This will also produce a very weak nail for the shoe.

On occasion, The farrier will accidentally, and often times unknowingly, drive a close or hot nail into the hoof, which can be due to;

- The horse moving around while nailing the shoe on.
- Having a hoof that is shelly, thin walled or missing wall, or just difficult to nail a shoe to.
- Perhaps even an inexperienced farrier.

Close Nail:

The nail is accidentally driven into the junction of the white line and the sensitive laminae, without actually invading the sensitive area, but it will cause pressure on these tissues. Sometimes the horse will show pain immediately, but more often it will go unnoticed for several (1-7) days or until the horse is worked. Usually the nail can be removed and the horse will often be sound once the nail has been removed.

Hot Nail:

This nail is accidentally driven so close to the sensitive structures of the hoof that the heat transfer from the friction of the nail being driven through the hoof is felt by the sensitive structures. The horse will show immediate

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pain or discomfort and will usually have an immediate reaction. This nail should be removed immediately and a new nail should be driven in a different location.

A bad nail or a nail that has invaded the sensitive structures, is by far the worst and hopefully most uncommon nailing problem. This will result in an immediate painful reaction as the nail actually has been not driven correctly and has been driven into the "quick" or sensitive part of the sole. When the nail is removed there is usually blood at the nail entrance site and sometimes at the exit site. The hole should be cleaned well and no nail should be driven into that hole. The horse should be current on their tetanus shots. Monitor for any developing lameness or abscess. This unfortunate situation should be treated promptly with veterinary and farrier involvement.

Minnesota Farriers Association

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