

5 Signs Your Horse Needs a Trim- ASAP

By Joe Novy, Professional Farrier



Healthy hooves are the foundation of a sound horse. As a farrier with decades at the anvil, I've seen how small delays in trimming can lead to big problems—like discomfort, imbalance, or even lameness. Domestic horses don't wear their hooves naturally like wild ones, so regular trims (every 6–8 weeks, depending on growth and activity) are essential.

Don't wait until your horse is obviously sore. Here are the top 5 red flags that it's time to call your farrier—ASAP:

1. *Overgrown or Flared Toes*



Look at the front of the hoof. If the toe is long, curled upward, or flared out at the sides, it's overdue. This shifts weight backward, straining tendons and ligaments. Check by running your hand along the hoof wall—if it feels uneven or excessively long, schedule a trim.

2. *Cracks or Chips in the Hoof Wall*



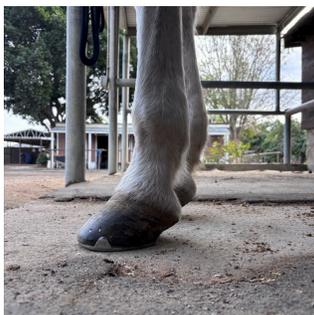
Small cracks can appear from dryness or imbalance, but frequent chipping or deep vertical/horizontal cracks often mean the hoof has grown too long and is splitting under stress (starting from the ground up) are common when unshod hooves are overgrown.

3. *Uneven Gait or Reluctance to Move Freely*



Your horse might take shorter strides, land toe-first (instead of heel-first), or seem stiff after standing. Overgrown hooves alter breakover and medial lateral balance causing discomfort in joints, tendons, and the navicular area.

4. *Heels Shooting Forward or Low*



From the side, the hoof-pastern axis should be a straight line. If heels are under-run (grown forward) or collapsed, the hoof is imbalanced.

5. *Increased Sensitivity*



Overgrown hooves can make your horse tender on uneven terrain. You might notice hind hooves interfering with fronts sheared heels or possible quarter cracks.

Quick Tip from Joe:

Measure from the coronary band to the ground at the toe—most horses need trimming if it's over 3–4 inches (varies by breed). Always consult a professional farrier for severe overgrowth; aggressive trimming can cause more harm. Don't wait until your horse is obviously sore. Here are the top 5 red flags that it's time to call your farrier—ASAP!

Catching these signs early keeps your horse comfortable and prevents costly issues.

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Stay sound, Joe Novy