Brief Guide to the Best Application of the EponaShoe

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This article is an attempt to present, as briefly as possible, a set of guidelines to get you the best success with EponaShoe. The use of EponaShoe is not all that different from conventional metal shoes, and it's certainly not 'rocket science', but after 10 years of use on horses, we have learned that there are some important differences between how you do metal, and how you do EponaShoe. We have distilled it down to 8 points!

1. Set the Shoe Back and Bevel

Figure 1 shoes an example of a properly set EponaShoe. In this case, we glued the shoe and also set 2 nails on each side. We also used packing.

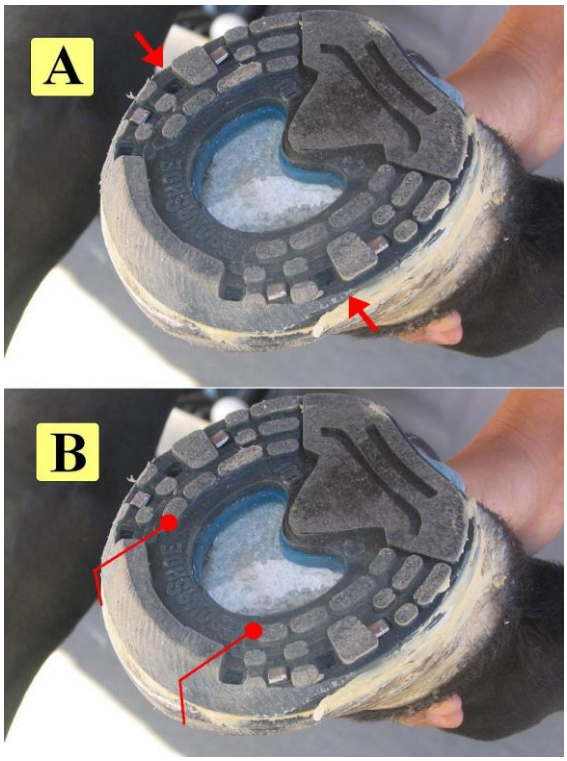

Figure 1: Glued-on, then 2 nails set on each side. The bevel starts quite wide - from the red arrows in (A) - with the main part of the bevel in the area indicated in (B).

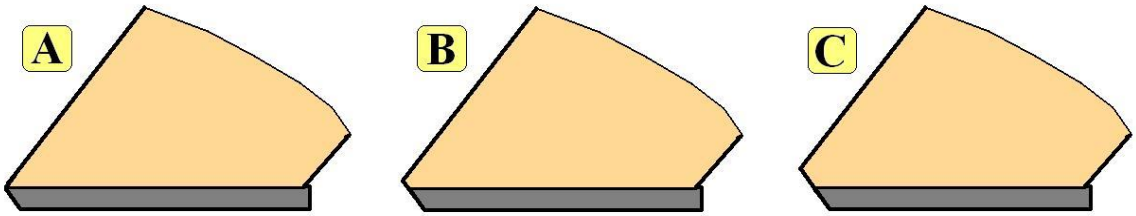

Figure 2: From small bevel (A) up to large bevel (C) EponaShoe allows you to choose the size of the bevel to achieve your goals. Our advice is that for the average hoof, (B) is the right amount. (A) is too little, and (C) is too much. An 'upright' hoof we might do like (A), and a long-toe-low-heel horse we might do like (C).

2. Wall Length and Sole

EponaShoe helps you avoid 'peripheral loading' because it has a built in frog support, and through use of our packing we can also partially load the sole (or not, depending on how packing is used). Our best practice is to keep the excess wall length beyond the sole very small – let's say zero up to 1/16". We do not want a cupped-out foot with wall extending way beyond the sole. The sole is like free packing, so don't remove it unless there is a very good reason.

Figure 3: We do not want a "cupped out sole" as in (A) with wall length extending down below the sole. Rather, as in (B) the wall should be trimmed to the sole or perhaps with just 1/16" beyond the sole. The hoof in (B) provides a great platform on which the EponaShoe is set, and can achieve its maximum benefits.

3. Fit Shoe Tight to Hoof

Metal shoes are set wider than the hoof, but EponaShoes should not be. A metal shoe, with its slippery surface, and with all the load on the wall, promotes the hoof wall sliding out – and so the wider-set shoe is required. But this is not natural, a barefoot horse, or a horse wearing EponaShoes with a supported frog, will not slide out laterally, so there is no need for a wide-set shoe.

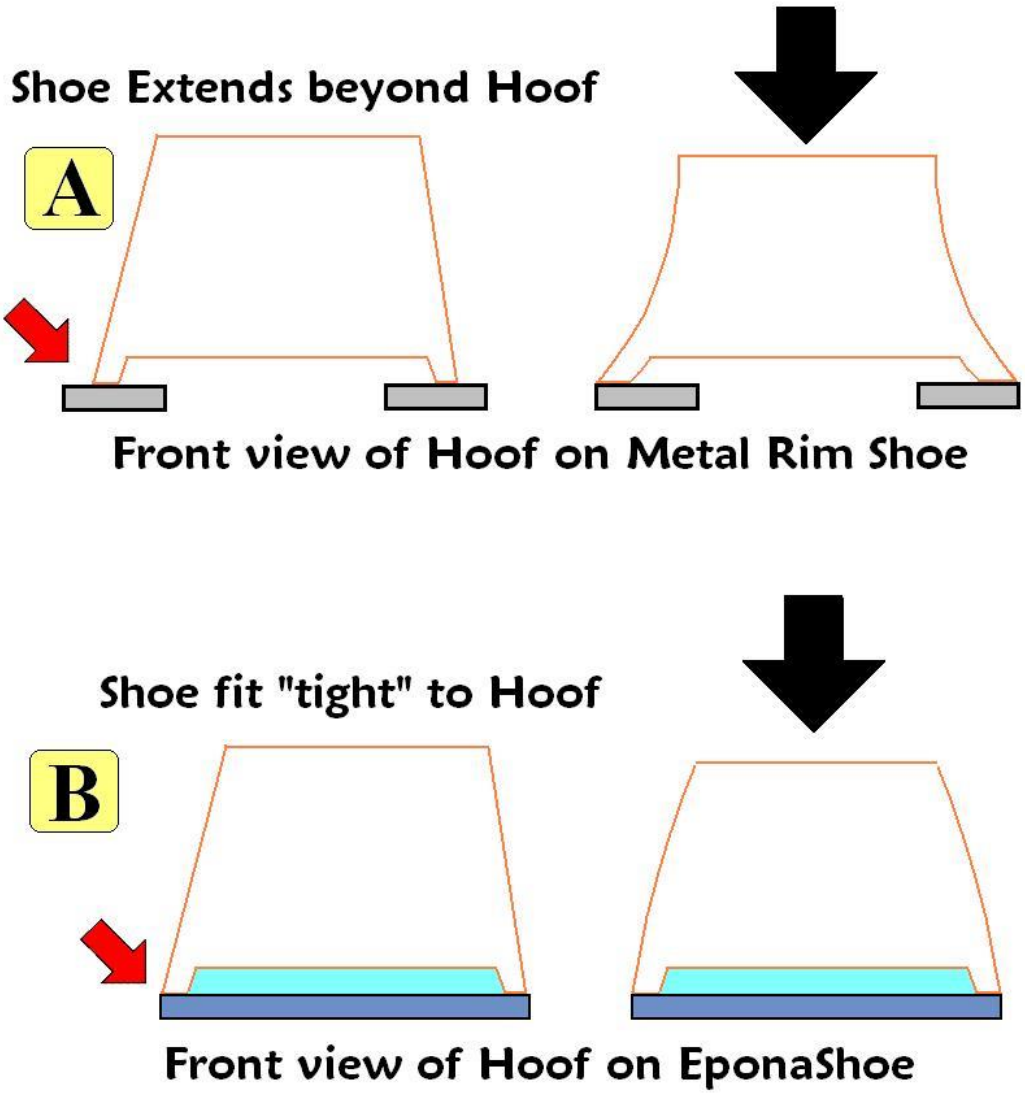

Figure 4: Unlike metal shoes, EponaShoes should be fit tight to the hoof with little to no shoe sticking out the sides.

4. Use Packing

Strictly speaking, there is no requirement to use packing with the EponaShoe, but we've come to use it on 98% of horses that we shoe with EponaShoe. It ensures that some weight is borne by the frog and bars and avoids the issues that come from peripheral loading of the foot.

Figure 5: Place packing in the commissures of the frog, and sometimes (depending on sole concavity) some packing over the sole.

5. Use 'Farthest Back' Nail Hole

As shown in figure 1 and also in figure 5, we like to be sure to use the farthest-back nail hole when nailing EponaShoes. In the case of metal shoes, this is often avoided in order to let the hoof flex more, but in the case of the flexible EponaShoe, and due to point #3 above, there is no reason to avoid the last nail hole.

6. If Gluing, Use Enough Glue

EponaShoes can be straight nailed on, but if you choose to use glue-on, or glue with nails, be sure to use enough glue of the right type. Although polyurethane glues are widely marketed, glues from the methacrylate family perform better (on *any* shoe, not just EponaShoe.) We like to use EquiBond glue. A frequent mistake for first-time gluers is not using enough glue. As shown in figure 5, you should squeeze out glue so that it is about ¼" high on the shoe. When you press the shoe onto the hoof, this will flatten to about 1/8".

Figure 6: Use methacrylate adhesive, and be sure to put on enough.

7. Casting on the EponaShoe

For some situations, it may be helpful to use casting material to apply the EponaShoe. To this end we invented 'Casting Hooks' which insert into the nail holes and have barbs that engage with the casting material. With their use, the casting material need not go under the shoe (where it would wear off and disturb the benefits of the EponaShoe tread pattern.)

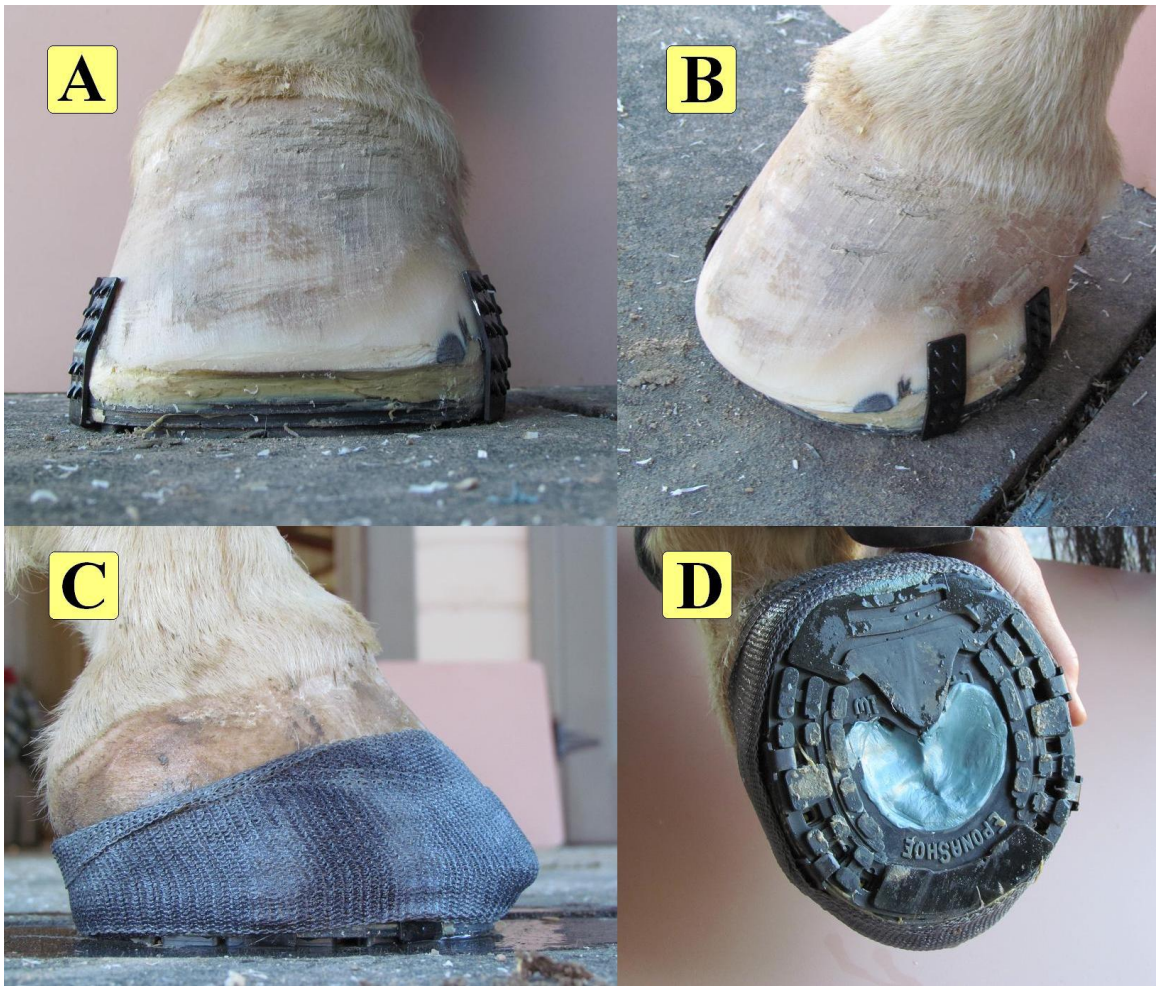

Figure 6: In (A) and (B) you can see that we have used 4 Casting Hooks. Then the 2" wide casting tape is applied around the hoof, taking care to go below the bulbs. In this case we did glue the shoe first, then cast; but some users don't use glue at all, and the shoe is held only with the casting system.

8. Learn More

We tried to make this introduction as brief as possible. We urge you to learn more about EponaShoe – how it works, why it works, etc. We have more to say about how best to trim for the EponaShoe – we call it "the Epona trim" – but this article was too brief to go into it. We hold clinics in Paso Robles, California several times a year, and there is a lot of information at our web-sites: www.EponaShoe.com and www.Epona-Institute.org .