

Mediolateral Balance I: Anatomical Facts, Conformational Aspects and Influence of Trimming or Shoeing

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Note: this is the first of a 2-part webinar series

“Mediolateral balance” is a term widely used by equine professionals, particularly farriers and veterinarians, that can sometimes be misleading. The aim of this presentation is to clarify the meaning of terms related to mediolateral balance, and to give an overview of current research findings with regard to trimming and shoeing.

This first lecture will define mediolateral balance from a static-geometric standpoint. Usually, static evaluation of the horse as a basis for trimming or shoeing includes assessment of the hoof and limb conformation. The presentation will discuss use and limitations of radiographic measurements in evaluating toe conformation as a reference for trimming and shoeing. In addition, this webinar will focus on achieving symmetry and considering individual properties of each horse. How far can we influence natural asymmetry of bones, soft tissues, or the hoof capsule? Where does this asymmetry come from? To answer these questions, we will review the anatomically-relevant structures and their biomechanics. The presentation of a case study, showing a horse with severe mediolateral imbalance of the left hind hoof, will explain the concept of creating functional symmetry through shoeing in a case of uncorrectable structural asymmetry. In addition, findings of current research showing the influence of trimming and shoeing on the phalangeal alignment and the distal interphalangeal joint space symmetry will be presented.

A second lecture will focus on “mediolateral balance” with regards to dynamic aspects (see June 5 webinar for more information).