

Concave vs. Flat Feet

My four horses live on 500 acres of hard, rocky, unyielding ground. I had always worried because they all had flat feet, while the ideal—or so I thought—was a more concave foot. Then I read Dr. Bowker's article in *The Horse's Hoof* about how the foot molds to accommodate the ground conditions, always trying to keep the sole in contact with the ground—therefore, soft, yielding soil will produce a concave foot and hard, unyielding ground will produce a flatter foot.

This fall, I sent one of my horses (a mustang, by the way) out for two months of full training. During that time, he lived on irrigated pasture. When he came home, he had a concave foot! I wish the photos showed this better—it was quite dramatic to see. The first one shows Rocky's concave foot just after he came home, and the others—taken on the same day—show the much flatter feet of the three horses who stayed at home and lived on hard ground.—Jill Owens



Top Left: Rocky's more concave hoof after living on soft ground for two months. Other three photos show the hooves of Jill's other horses, who stayed at home on the hard ground.