



Bare It All: How Top Sport Horses Are Competing Without Shoes

The Swedish show jumping horses have been the talk of the town lately, and it's not just because they won the team gold medal and jumped more clear rounds than any other nation at the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games. If you heard anything repeated over the livestream, it was probably that two of the three Swedish equine competitors took on the Olympic show jumping course **barefoot**. Imagine if an Olympic track athlete took to the 100-meter hurdles without shoes and won!



We put shoes on our horses for several reasons. Horseshoes provide protection when wear exceeds growth, traction on certain surfaces, and they can help abate structural issues within the foot and certain lameness issues.

Though horseshoes can and often do provide benefits, it may be more beneficial for a horse's hoof health and overall well-being to go without shoes. It does, however, take time for the hoof to strengthen and adjust to going barefoot.

Why Go Barefoot?

Palm Beach Equine Clinic veterinarian and farrier Dr. Stephen O'Grady approaches equine podiatry on an individual horse basis, and he has been supportive of taking shoes off sport horses for many years. "It's not something that's new to me," says Dr. O'Grady. "I advocate taking shoes off when it's possible, especially when trying to rehabilitate a compromised or distorted hoof capsule. With the footing you have today in most jumper rings, Wellington competition venues included, the horses can often go barefoot. The horse's foot, when the structures are in good condition, without a shoe is the best at accepting weight, absorbing concussion, dissipating the energy of impact, and allowing the horse to perform without any possible encumbrances on its feet."



Modified hoof cast to help transition from shoes to barefoot Hoof wall being trimmed on a angle in front of the white line Note the rounded edge around the perimeter of the hoof wall

One of the biggest benefits to a barefoot horse, Dr. O'Grady explains, is allowing the whole hoof surface to interact with the ground and receive the stimulation that will continually strengthen the overall foot. When you have the horse's hoof shod, the weight of the horse is placed around the periphery of the hoof, where the shoe sits, putting all the horse's weight on the hoof wall and not utilizing the soft tissue structures within the hoof capsule. A healthy bare foot is much better at accepting weight than a foot with a shoe because it loads the weight across the entire foot.

[Read More on Horse Network](#)

Congratulations to All Olympians



Sabine Schut-Kery (USA) and Sanceo won the FEI Grand Prix Special CDI5* presented by PBEC at the 2021 Adequan Global Dressage Festival in February. Photo by Susan J. Stickler

Palm Beach Equine Clinic extends congratulations to all of the athletes that represented their respective countries at the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games. While challenges were abundant, the event was awe-inspiring and the best of equestrian sport was on display.

PBEC extends a special congratulations to our friends Dr. Mike Heitmann and Alice Womble, the owners of Sanceo, ridden by Sabine Schut-Kery. Sanceo was a part of the U.S. dressage team that won silver and had two personal best scores at the Tokyo Olympic Games.

How This Pony Bounced Back Thanks to PBEC

Featured in [The Plaid Horse Pony Issue](#)

The old adage "no foot, no horse" is undeniably one of the truest statements when it comes to the horse. Many intricate structures compose this foundation, and the overall health of the hoof is paramount. So, what happens when a portion of your horse's hoof is suddenly missing?

Owners Josh and Laura Gross found themselves in this predicament when their barn's owner, Ayriel Italia, called them to say that their daughter's Welsh pony had cut herself and needed immediate medical attention. While in the paddock, Blue Melody, known simply as "Melody," had gotten her left hind hoof underneath the gate and suffered a serious laceration.



Photo courtesy of Josh and Laura Gross

"We were initially frantic without more information," recalled Josh. "We consider Melody a family member, and her rider is an eight-year-old."

The self-professed novice horse-owner parents had been learning the ropes of equine health and care through supporting their young daughter Saylor's passion for horses. They turned to the expertise and guidance of Italia and trainer Shanna Sachenbacher, who immediately called veterinarian Dr. Kathleen Timmins of Palm Beach Equine Clinic.

[Read More on The Plaid Horse](#)

PBEC in the News

PBEC's Dr. Laura Hutton on Four Health Issues To Watch For

[Practical Horseman](#)

No Sweat: Understanding Anhidrosis in Horses

[United States Polo Association – Polo Players' Edition](#)



Warm temperatures and long hours of daylight bring greater opportunity to ride and enjoy your horse but time spent outdoors during the summer can have downsides, too. What season-related health problems is your horse likely to encounter? Here are four common concerns to keep on your radar, plus ways to safeguard your horse.

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Summer heat is in full force and with the unrelenting temperatures and high humidity comes an increased risk of anhidrosis. Anhidrosis is the inability to produce an adequate amount of sweat. Horses suffering from this condition are often called "non-sweaters." Sweating allows the horse to thermoregulate and maintain a consistent internal temperature.

[Read More](#)

Join the Team at Palm Beach Equine Clinic

Palm Beach Equine Clinic is seeking an Equine Hospital Technician in Wellington, Florida. Qualified applicants will be highly experienced and knowledgeable in horse care with great attention to detail.

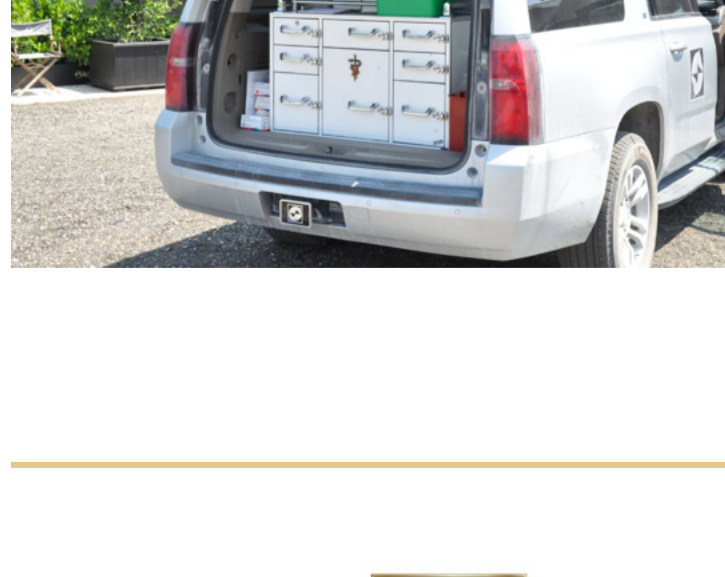
Equine Hospital Technicians are vital to Clinic and ensure patients are constantly monitored and receive immediate care. Punctual, hardworking, and teamwork-oriented individuals are encouraged to apply.



[Read More and Apply](#)

Where Are the Palm Beach Equine Clinic Veterinarians?

Several of our veterinarians are on the road this time of year, offering their services across the United States. Satellite veterinary services can be found throughout the summer in the areas and at the competitions listed below.



- HITS Saugerties Fall Series - Saugerties, NY
- Old Salem Summer Horse Shows - North Salem, NY
- Keeneland Racetrack Fall Meet - Lexington, KY
- Lamplight Equestrian Center - Wayne, IL (Veterinarian on call within region)

