Comparing trims -. *Strasser's "Basic Trim" and the "wild-horse" trim;*

Here are the differences and similarities between Dr. Strasser's "Basic Trim" as I learned it in 2001, and the "wild-horse" trim; with the reasons as I understand them.

Dr. Strasser originally designed her trim for the rehabilitation of extremely deformed, lame hooves that other veterinarians had given up on -- sometimes after years of "conventional" treatment. Her strategy is to remove most of the deformed material and quickly give the horse a basic hoof that will circulate blood (hoof mechanism), so that he has the means to heal his own hoof.

She kept the horses on rubber mats for several months until the hooves recovered enough to go on soft ground comfortably. If you don't have a large rubber-matted area, you should modify the "Basic Trim" toward a much less radical trim. For hooves that are not extremely deformed, Dr. Strasser's "Basic Trim" can be unnecessarily severe.

The "wild horse" trim was designed to return shod horses to a barefoot condition, shaping the hooves like those that free-roaming horses produce through constant growth-and-wear. Since the hooves are already sound, or nearly so, the shape can be changed gradually towards the ideal, while the horse continues to live on its usual terrain.

In order to quickly increase circulation, the Strasser trim does several things to increase or even exaggerate hoof mechanism:

1) Strasser trim: Trim the sole to mimic the concavity of a sound hoof. The reason is that the thinner sole spreads easily, which allows the bottom edge of the hoof wall to flex wider during weightbearing, giving increased hoof mechanism.

Wild horse trim: Leave the sole at its full thickness. The sole is considered to be an important structure. It helps to hold the hoof together, helps prevent white line separation, and protects the interior of the hoof from the ground. In a sound or nearly-sound hoof, there is already sufficient hoof mechanism. Leaving the sole at its full thickness avoids soreness and abscessing. Concavity will occur naturally when the white line has fully recovered from the damage caused by horseshoes.

2) Strasser trim: Shorten the bars to end halfway along the frog, with a bar height of 1 cm halfway along the bars; then slope the sole in the seat-of-corn to meet the shortened bar. This is done to help de-contract contracted heels, which increases hoof mechanism.

Wild horse trim: Trim the bars to the level of the sole or slightly longer, though not in contact with the ground. The connection between the bars and the sole is considered an important part of the heel structure; it helps to hold the hoof together under the forces of weightbearing. De-contraction is accomplished, instead, using the toe rocker (see Trim page) or mustang roll to eliminate forward toe leverage on the heels.

3) Strasser trim: Make notches or "opening cuts" if contracted heels are curved inside a line from the point-of-frog to the outside of the bulbs. The reason is to encourage contracted heels to de-contract, which increases hoof mechanism.

Wild horse trim: Omit "opening cuts." Depending on climate and terrain, they can actually increase heel contraction (heels leaning inwards), or increase white line separation (heels leaning outwards). Instead, de-contraction is accomplished gradually by rockering or mustang-rolling the toe to eliminate forward toe leverage on the heels.

4) Strasser trim: Trim the heels to a 3.5 cm height (vertical from the back corner of the lateral cartilages). The reason is to quickly place the coffin bone in a ground-parallel position, which increases hoof mechanism. If, when shortening the heel to this measurement, you get to blood in the seat-of-corn, wait till the sole recedes before you shorten the heels more.

Wild horse trim: Trim the heels only to the outside edge of the sole in the seat-of-corn. The reason is to avoid thinning the sole, which can sore the horse. If the heels are long when trimmed to the sole, the sole in the seat-of-corn will recede over time (as the bone re-shapes itself), allowing gradual shortening of the heels. [/I]

5) Strasser trim: Trim the hoof to a 30-degree hairline while the hoof is on the ground, with front toes at about 45 degrees and hind toes at about 55 degrees. The reason is to quickly place the coffin bone in a ground-parallel position, which gives the hoof capsule the most efficient shape for hoof mechanism.

Wild horse trim: Trim the hoof wall to the edge of the sole. Often, trying to get an exact 30 degree hairline makes you shorten either the toe or the heel too much, thinning the sole and soring the horse. The hairline angle will change gradually as the hoof returns to its own inherent shape.

There is one more difference between the two trims, not related to hoof mechanism:

Strasser trim: Finish the hoof wall with a flat bottom. The reason is that the long, flat toe will encourage the pastern to a lower angle, in hooves that have had the heels too long. A flare, or a toe "long out in front," can be backed with a vertical cut, to where the outside of the wall (if not flared) would meet the ground.

Wild horse trim: Finish the hoof with a rounded bevel ("mustang roll") to the water line (inside layer of hoof wall). The reason is to give the hoof a fast breakover; reduce flaring (white line separation); and remove the lever force of a long toe, which contracts the heels. A flare, or a toe "long out in front," can be rockered and then rounded as far as the edge of the sole, reducing the additional lever effect of the flare.

Dr. Strasser sometimes uses a "modified" trim on sound horses. This trim is quite similar to the wild horse trim and omits these radical steps (except for the long breakover). I believe she would serve the population of sound horses better if she would teach her "modified" trim at the 3-day introductory seminars, where many of the students are beginners, and save her "basic," more radical trim for students in the professional course.[/B][/INDENT][/B]