

Holistic Horseworks Live

Substack Sample #1

Bailey the 20-Year-Old Rodeo Mare: Hoof Imbalances, Hunter's Bump, and Hope

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Holistic Horseworks Live with Tessa and Bailey (February 4th, 2026)

[April Love](#)

Apr 04, 2026

Tessa brought her 20-year-old paint mare Bailey to Holistic Horseworks Live. Bailey's a rodeo horse — Tessa ties goats off her for high school rodeo. She described her as "a giant goofball, not super coordinated, conformation not great."

That's actually a really honest assessment. But here's what I want every horse owner reading this to understand: what looks like poor

conformation is often just posture. And posture comes from the body.

Fix what the body is doing, and the horse you're looking at changes.

Here's what I saw when I looked at Bailey...

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Left and Right Sides



What Her Topline Was Telling Me

The first thing I noticed was her mane. It was flipping to one side — and I know a lot of people think that's just which side the mane is “supposed” to be on. It's not. When a mane flips, it means the muscles on one side of the neck are working harder than the other. They get bigger, and the hair follicles get pulled that direction. When I see a mane flip at the poll or at the withers, I know there's work to do.

Then there was the hunter's bump.

Bailey was croup high — her hindquarters sitting higher than her withers — and you could already see the beginning of a hunter's bump forming. A lot of people hear "hunter's bump" and think it's a jumping horse thing, or just part of how some horses are built. It isn't. That bump is a calcification. It means the hips have been out of alignment for a while, and the body has started laying down calcium to stabilize the area. That horse's hocks and stifles are on a timeline. It doesn't matter what discipline she's in.

You could also see it in her muscling. When the front end is doing all the work and the hind end can't push and drive the way it should, the muscles around the withers and shoulder get overdeveloped and tight. It starts to look like the withers have disappeared. There should be about a two-inch gap between the top of the scapula and the withers. When you don't see that gap, the front end is overworking. That's not conformation. That's posture — and posture is something we can work with.

Front Hooves



What Her Front Hooves Were Telling Me

Here's the thing about hooves: they don't lie. They show you exactly how the horse has been loading and standing, 24 hours a day, every day of their life.

Looking at Bailey's front hooves from the front, you could see the fetlock and pastern angle going outward — and from the rear, the inside hoof wall was almost straight up and down. A healthy hoof should be wider at the ground than at the coronary band. Not narrower. When that inside

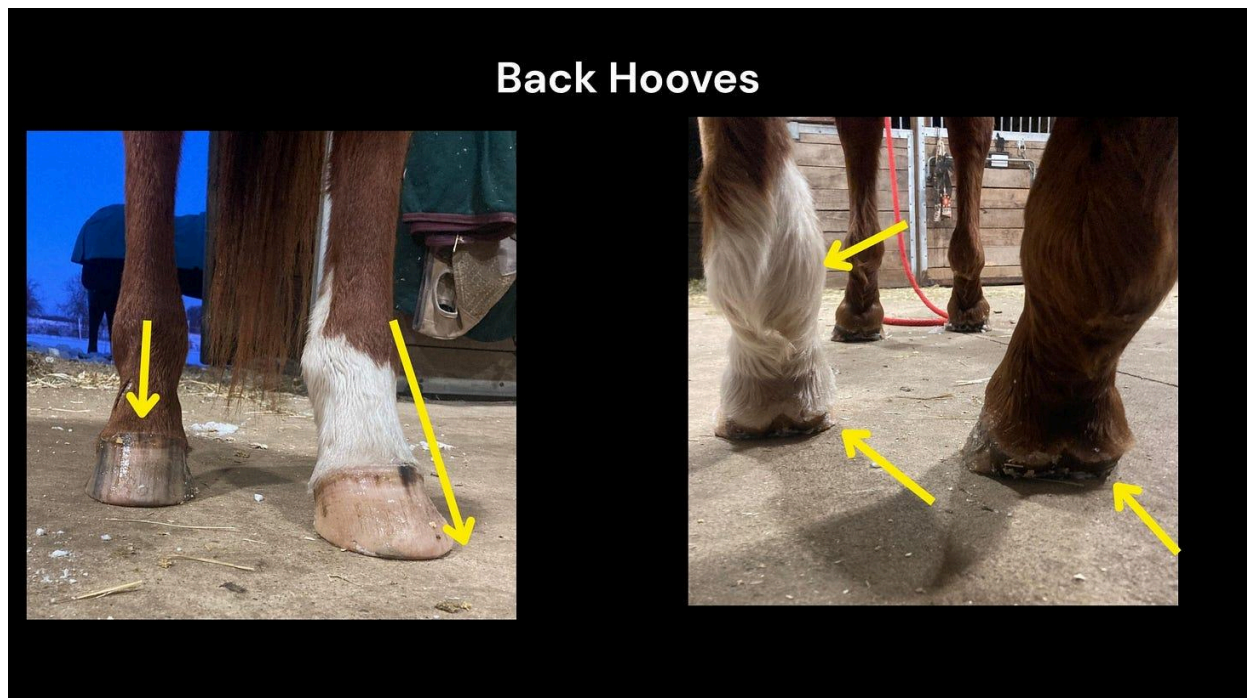
wall is jammed straight like that, the horse is loading all of that force onto the inside heel instead of distributing it correctly across the whole hoof.

That's what I mean when I say she's standing in clown shoes. You can ask her to be an athlete all day long, but if the foundation she's working off of is this far out of balance, she physically can't do what you're asking.

When hooves load like that over time, you get sidebone. You get ringbone. You get arthritic fetlocks. I could already see it starting in Bailey's front hooves — the fetlock joints were uneven, one starting to swell from the excess stress.

And here's what I want people to stop thinking: this is not a bad farrier problem. Yes, there are bad farriers. But that's not what's causing this. The hoof grows the way it does because of how the horse is standing on it. Until you address why the horse is standing that way — which runs all

the way up through the shoulder, the first rib, and the atlas — you're just managing the symptom. The hoof will keep doing exactly what it's doing.



What Her Back Hooves Were Telling Me

Bailey's left hind was a different angle than her right, and that asymmetry always tells me to go looking higher up. Something in the left

inner thigh and groin was too tight — pulling the hamstring and hock inward so the whole leg was loading off-angle.

Her right hind looked more balanced, but it was compensating. She was landing on the outside of that right hoof because the left wasn't able to do its job. If you watched her move, she wasn't pushing and driving from behind — she was pulling from the front. A rodeo horse doing that isn't going to last, and she isn't going to be the athlete Tessa needs her to be.

The compensation pattern on the right fetlock was already visible. When joints don't load correctly, the body generates heat, and heat triggers calcium deposits. That's arthritis in the making. The answer isn't injections — that just buys time while the loading problem continues. The answer is finding out why that left hind is pulling in and addressing that chain all the way up through the body.

What I Would Do for Bailey's Hooves

First, soak those hooves. Three days in a row: one cup Epsom salt, two full droppers of Dynamite liquid trace minerals, 32 oz warm water per hoof in a soaker boot, 45 minutes each. This addresses white line, frog fungal, and bacterial issues — and it toughens the sole so the horse can transition off shoes without becoming sore through the hooves.

[Click here to get Dynamite Liquid Trace Minerals →](#)

Apply Dynamite Balm to the coronary band to support growth and help the hoof relax back toward a more balanced shape.

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If there's white line separation showing — and there was on Bailey's hooves — that's not just a hoof problem. Crumbly walls, separation, thin soles are signs that the liver and kidneys aren't processing nutrition the way they should. You can keep adding hoof supplements, but until those pathways are clear, the horse can't use what you're feeding. NCD Liquid

Zeolites are what I recommend — nanoparticle size, they pass the blood-brain barrier and pull heavy metals and toxins out passively.

[Click here to get NCD Liquid Zeolites →](#)

But the hoof soak is just the start. The hooves will only change when the body changes. When we release the first rib, align the pelvis, and get the horse standing square under herself, the farrier can finally do their job.

I've had trimmers tell me — within four to six weeks of starting this work — “I don't know what you did differently, but I can finally shape this hoof the way I want to.”

Head



What Her Head Was Telling Me

By the time I got to Bailey's head, the story was already clear. The head confirmed it.

Looking at her straight on, you could see the asymmetry immediately — one eye level higher than the other, the horizontal lines across her face uneven. That right eye was the dropped one. The lacrimal bone had shifted, compressing the nerve and blood supply to that eye. That eye throbs. The horse rubs it on her foreleg — always the same side. The

inside corner of that eye will be pinkish instead of white. The tear duct won't flush properly no matter what the vet tries.

I asked the audience on the live show to raise their hand if their horse always had one weepy eye. A lot of hands went up. This is why.

Steroids can knock down the inflammation temporarily, but they're not addressing what moved that bone. The eye needs the lacrimal bone brought back up, blood and oxygen restored, the nerve released. That's the work we do in Level 3: Equine Cranial Decompression. Once that happens, the draining stops, the throbbing stops, and the horse stops banging that eye on everything.

You could also see atrophy in Bailey's TMJ area — the masseter muscles were hollow. Her dental history confirmed it: she regularly develops hooks. When the cranial bones are shifted, the horse can't chew laterally the way they're supposed to. The teeth develop hooks and waves because of how the jaw is being forced to move. Floating helps manage it, but it comes back — because the underlying cranial issue is still there.

The Bigger Picture

Bailey is 20 years old and still competing. Tessa loves this horse. And there is so much more life left in her — but only if we stop treating the symptoms and start addressing what's actually driving them.

The croup high, the overdeveloped front end, the hooves loading incorrectly, the arthritic fetlocks developing, the weepy eye, the dental hooks — these are not separate problems. They are one story, told from the poll to the hooves, about a body that has been compensating for a long time.

Get the body aligned, get the hooves loading correctly, support the head, and then watch what this mare can actually do.

Once Bailey's on the Holistic Horseworks program, she should be competing well for another five years and doing it a lot more comfortably than she is right now.

There's always a reason. We just have to learn to look for it.

Want to Learn How to Do This for Your Own Horse?

My **Level 1 Equine Musculoskeletal Unwinding Home Study** teaches you the structural assessment and bodywork I used with Ice — how to read the hooves, release the first rib, and address the psoas.

You can get **\$75 off** with coupon code **LIVE75** at checkout.

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