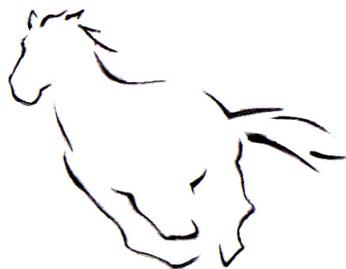


*Dressing to Trim
Even When It's Cold*



CYNTHIA NIEMELA

L I B E R A T E D
H O R S E M A N S H I PTM



H E L P I N G P E O P L E & H O R S E S
W O R L D W I D E

LiberatedHorsemanship.com

Your source for multi-disciplinary, science-based information about
the care and use of horses.

DRESSING TO TRIM

Cynthia Niemela



Warrenton, Missouri

DRESSING TO TRIM EVEN WHEN IT'S COLD

Copyright © 2009 Liberated Horsemanship

Published in the United States by

Liberated Horsemanship Press

P.O. Box 546

Warrenton, MO 63383

Contribution #14 from Liberated Horsemanship.

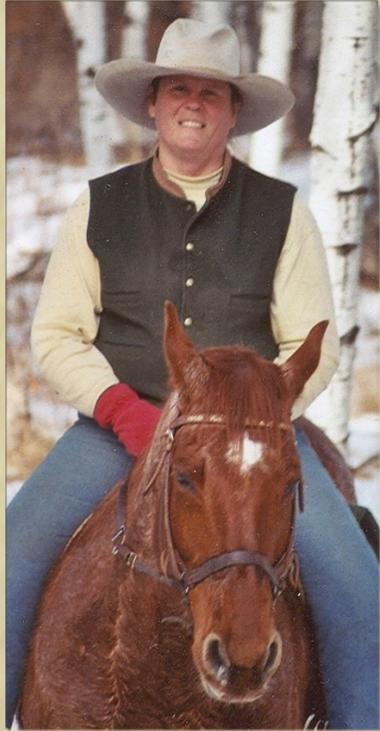
Cover photograph by Dr. Bruce Nock of Watershed Farm

Cover Design and Page Layout by:

Bruce Nock, Liberated Horsemanship

This publication may be reproduced and distributed only in its entirety and with appropriate acknowledgement to the author and Liberated Horsemanship.

This article is intended for educational purposes. Neither the author nor the publisher has liability or responsibility for any actions arising from the information shared in this publication.



A B O U T T H E A U T H O R

Cynthia Niemela graduated from the University of Minnesota with a degree in Animal Science. She now lives in the Black Hills of South Dakota about 15 miles from Mount Rushmore. Cynthia is a certified natural hoof care professional who trims full-time in South Dakota and Minnesota under all sorts of challenging weather conditions. She is well qualified to give advice on how to dress for trimming hooves. Cynthia serves as both a Field Instructor and a clinician for Liberated Horsemanship. She is also a certified riding instructor for both English and Western riding. In addition, Cynthia has been active in 4-H as a judge, leader and coach at both the local and state level. By all counts she is a very knowledgeable, active and experienced horse person.



Dressing To Trim

Trimming feet, as with any other occupation, is easier to do when you are well dressed for the job. This job involves working in all kinds of weather and under many different conditions. I have trimmed horses in 100° weather, and I have trimmed outdoors when it was -10. I have trimmed outdoors in hot sun, rain and in snow. It makes the job go much more smoothly when you are prepared for the conditions.

Warm weather is pretty simple to accommodate. The biggest issue is usually heat. The solution to this is simple and well known; wear cotton. Cotton washes easily and helps to keep you cool. I know people that will wear shorts under their trimming apron, and who will wear a short-sleeved shirt. I always wear long cotton jeans and long sleeved shirts. I think the long jeans and the long sleeves help to protect the skin on my arms and legs from sunburn, cuts and scrapes as well as from bug bites and dirt from the hoof.

Sturdy boots of some kind are also an absolute requirement. In addition, a trimmer needs to be sure that her hair will stay out of her face with a hat or headband.

Fall and winter are the seasons that make dressing for comfort and warmth difficult when working in a very physical job that may be done in a wide variety of environments. I trim in the far north of Minnesota, and in the Black Hills of South Dakota and sometimes it gets pretty cold when I don't have the option of rescheduling an appointment. I have had the experience of starting the day trimming at 50° and finishing it at 9°.

So, what are the requirements for warm clothing while trimming a horse? Well, my muscles are cold at the start, so I need to be warm at the start of the trimming session. Yet, as the session goes on I will be warmer and warmer, so I need to have layers that I can remove as the trimming goes on. In addition, I will be getting into and out of a vehicle, and trimming in a variety of environments that range from open outdoor sheds to heated barns, which makes the layers even more necessary. I will be bending and stretching while trimming so I need clothing that will give me freedom of movement and will keep my lower back covered when I bend over. That means that my clothing can't be terribly bulky, which will usually rule out most of the heavy-duty winter chore clothing. At the same time, this job is very hard on clothing so a lot of the cold weather clothing designed for running, hiking and skiing are not rugged enough to last, and cost too much to be wearing it out as quickly as I would. And last, the job will result in getting dirty so the clothing must be washable.

Well then, what does work?

In moderate summer weather, I generally trim horses while wearing a chambray work shirt with long tails, blue jeans that are not too tight, cotton socks and some kind of work boots. The first article of warmer clothing that I add is a wool vest that is long enough in the back to cover all the way down below my jeans waistband when I am bending over. I generally wear a wool vest to start the day any time the morning temperature is 70° or below. I may



Fall gear with wool vest, carrying a cotton jean jacket

not need the vest first thing in the morning, but after a day of work when I am warm and sweaty, I will need to put that vest on to keep me from getting chilled on the drive home or sometimes even between client appointments.

The next article of clothing I add is a cotton jean jacket. This will be as much jacket as I need while the temp is between 60° and 45° in the morning. When the morning temps dip below 45° I will switch to a 3-season jacket that reaches well below my waist and that is as much jacket as I will wear all winter. Anything more will be too restrictive. When the morning temp drops below 45° I will also add a “toque” style hat. A toque is a

knit hat, usually wool, and is lined with polar fleece. A toque won't pop off the top of my head like a watch cap, and it does not shade my eyes as the lighting fades in the winter months or trimming moves under artificial light. That hat goes on and off as needed to help keep me from getting sweaty or chilled.



Three season jacket and toque style hat for weather below 45° in the morning

When the temp drops below freezing is when I bring out my warm leg wear. I have found that insulated chore bib

overalls put pressure on my shoulders that will become very uncomfortable as the day goes on. They are also hard to keep clean. I like the Wrangler Rugged-Wear thinsulate lined jeans for winter trimming. I go through about two pairs per year. When combined with other warm clothing, this is all I wear for jeans even if I have to trim at -10. I don't even have to wear long underwear beneath these jeans to stay comfortable. When the temperature hits freezing is when I switch to thinsulate insulated boots as well. There are many brands available at this point, but it is very important to be sure that the boot you finally find does not have steel toes or a steel last. Both will transport extreme cold from the ground directly to your feet. For those who like to wear toe protection, there are some

very good boots available with composition toes and there are boots available with composition lasts. Look for them. This is also the time to add a pair of Smart-Wool socks. They wick sweat away from your skin and help to prevent cold feet.

When the temperature drops below 15° I add a couple more pieces of clothing. I find that a very fine, thin, wool undershirt makes a big difference in keeping you warm. Adding a silk scarf to your neck area will also help to keep you warmer. For your boots, there are foil insoles. These will reflect the cold from a frozen floor back to the floor and the heat from your feet back to your feet. I don't have a pair yet this year, but in the past I



Dressed for temperatures below 15° with thinsulate lined jeans (note red lining on jeans), thinsulate lined boots, silk scarf and wool undershirt (shown on right).

have ordered them from a number of different Horse Supply catalogs. They do require that your boots don't fit too tightly. I may switch my chambray shirt for a cotton flannel shirt or a cotton turtleneck.

And then there are gloves. Most trimmers wear gloves while trimming. At 10° you MUST wear gloves. I wear the same kinds of gloves in both summer and winter. They are Atlas Therma Fit gloves. This is a snug fitting glove that has a rubberized grip surface that lets me handle my tools confidently. It also has a thick cotton-like liner that is an insulating layer. In the summer this insulating layer will absorb sweat and keep my joints warm and loose. In cold weather it is an insulator that is effective even when my hands get wet. Yes, when I begin my trim at -8°, my hands will be cold for the first two feet. Then the movement will warm my hands enough so that they actually feel warm for the rest of that trimming appointment. Carry at least two pair so that you can put on a dry

pair for each trimming appointment. Carry a pair of chopper mitts or polar fleece mittens for driving. It is important to realize that at -8° you will fatigue much faster than you will at 70° so you must rest and rehydrate frequently.



The gloves I wear year round.

Summary Of Temperature/Clothing Recommendations

70° Plus:

Jeans, cotton long-sleeved shirt, ball cap or headband, Therma Fit gloves, cotton socks and sturdy boots.

60° – 70° Add:

Wool vest

45° – 60° Add:

Jean jacket or other light jacket that washes easily

32° – 45° Add:

3 season jacket instead of the jean jacket and a “toque” style knit hat

15° – 32° Add:

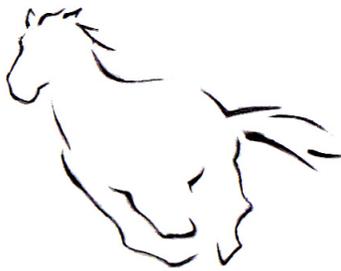
Thinsulate lined jeans, thinsulate lined boots and “Smart-Wool” socks

15° and Below:

Fine wool undershirt, silk neck scarf, foil insoles, may switch to a cotton flannel shirt or cotton turtleneck.

And as a final note, if you don't warm up as you proceed with the trimming, stop trimming. The horse will interpret your shivering or muscle tightness as anxiety and begin to look for bogeymen. The same thing is true if the owner is handling the horse. Monitor the horse handler's comfort. When your horse handler tenses up due to cold, the horse will tense up as well. Trimming in extreme cold weather will slow your reflexes and normal reaction time. If you have the choice, it may be a good idea to reschedule that appointment.

L I B E R A T E D
H O R S E M A N S H I PTM



H E L P I N G P E O P L E & H O R S E S
W O R L D W I D E

LiberatedHorsemanship.com

Your source for multi-disciplinary, science-based information about
the care and use of horses.



**O T H E R
F R E E
A R T I C L E S**

MY CONVERSION
A FARRIER'S JOURNEY TO NATURAL HOOF CARE



John Graves, CP

FORM FOLLOWS FUNCTION
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NATURAL HOOF



Ann Corso, CP

**HOOF
ADAPTATION**
AS I SEE IT



BRUCE NOCK, Ph.D.

**CHOOSING A HOOF
CARE PROFESSIONAL**



Bruce Nock, Ph.D.

Download at LiberatedHorsemanship.com