

Farrier

Trim hooves and shape shoes for horses. No license anywhere in the country, and almost everyone works for themselves.

TYPICAL PAY

\$35,360

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$27k to \$50k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

1 to 3 years

after high school

DEMAND

Moderate

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

**Barns, stables, racetracks,
backyard paddocks, the back of y...**

How you get there

- 1 High school and horses** Grade 12
 Get around horses any way you can: lessons, barn chores, a summer job mucking stalls. You need to be calm and safe near a 1,200 pound animal before anything else.
- 2 Horseshoeing school** 8 to 36 weeks
 Full-time courses run from a few weeks to nearly a year. Anatomy, forging, trimming and shoeing on live horses all day.
- 3 Apprentice with a working farrier** 1 to 2 years
 Ride along, carry tools, do the easy trims, get corrected constantly. This is where you actually learn the trade.
- 4 Build your own book**
 Take the horses your mentor cannot fit in, then the barns nobody is serving. Word of mouth is the only marketing that works.
- 5 Certify if you want to** Optional, from year 1 on
 The American Farrier's Association offers voluntary levels, and the top one asks for written and practical exams plus forging a bar shoe against the clock.

Pros and cons

- + Trained and earning in about a year
- + No license, no boss, no office
- + Paid the same day you do the work
- The published wage figures look low and the group is wrong
- Brutal on your back, knees and hands
- A kick or a strike can end a career in a second

Good to know

In Britain it is a crime to do this untrained

The UK has required farriers to be registered since the 1970s, and shoeing a horse without it is an offense. The United States has no such law in any state, which is why the American system leans so hard on...

Hooves grow like fingernails

Most horses need a farrier every 6 to 8 weeks, all year, for their whole lives. That is why the work is recession-resistant in a way most trades are not. The horse does not care about the economy.

Optional boosts

Farrier Classification. Certified Farrier. Certified Tradesman Farrier. Certified Journeyman Farrier.

Where these numbers come from

My Next Move: Animal Caretakers (39-2021.00)

O*NET: Certified Journeyman Farrier, American Farrier's Association

Kentucky Horseshoeing School: programs

Apprenticeship.gov, United States Department of Labor

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in United States dollars, based on Bureau of Labor Statistics wage data and published pay scales. They vary by state, employer and experience. Tuition is for in-state students at public schools unless the card says otherwise. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/us/careers/farrier>



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