



Arena Footing Maintenance Guide

Best practices for IGK wax-based synthetic surfaces

QUICK REFERENCE

TOPIC	GUIDELINE
Grooming Depth	½" to ¾" surface only — keep base compacted
Tine & Ripper Depth	~½" penetration for both
Equipment Speed	3–5 mph — slower is fine, faster causes migration
Grooming Frequency	1–2× per week for light commercial use
Horse Adjustment	1–2 week acclimation period is normal
Regrade Interval	Every 2–3 years (3–6 hours per session)
Footing Flip	Brings fresh wax-content footing to surface — restores day-one performance
Footing Adds	½"–1" of IGK wax footing replenishes depth and rejuvenates surface
Never Add	Raw sand or raw fiber — risks tipping formulation and losing dust control
IGK Care Plan	Subscription service — regrades, footing adds & annual consulting

ABOUT IGK SYNTHETIC FOOTING

IGK surfaces are premium wax-based synthetic arena footings engineered for superior performance, longevity, and consistency. Unlike traditional sand or fiber footings, IGK products are designed to stay compacted at depth while providing an ideal riding surface at the top layer.



The footing is designed to be rolled tight. Groom only the top ½" to ¾" — the remaining depth should remain compacted and undisturbed.

GROOMER SETUP & CALIBRATION

Proper groomer setup is critical. An incorrectly configured groomer is the most common cause of footing problems.

- Level the machine: Use a small level to set the groomer in the level position, ensuring even contact of all tines and rollers.
- 3-Point Hitch: Adjustments are made directly on the 3-point hitch ratchet.
- Tine Depth: Set tines to approximately ½" penetration. Ripper blades can be adjusted separately to the same depth.
- Surface Contact: When passing over the footing, all surface points should be 'tickled' or lightly ripped and then laid out evenly with roller wheels trailing.
- Missed Areas: If you see untouched portions of the surface, adjust rippers and tines down slightly — they may also indicate low spots in the arena.

⚠️ If the groomer is plowing or dragging footing, it is set too deep or is not level. This creates unevenness that is difficult to correct without significant concentrated effort.

GROOMING TECHNIQUE & SPEED

- Speed: Maintain a speed of 3–5 mph when dragging the groomer.
- Slow Speed: Going slower than 3 mph creates no issues and is perfectly acceptable.
- Avoid High Speed: Going too fast causes unnecessary footing migration and leaves an inconsistently groomed surface.
- Equipment Role: The groomer is a light-duty leveler — it is not designed to plow deeply into the footing.
- Too Deep: Grooming too deep will create uneven conditions and gradually move the footing out of level. The primary indicator is footing 'plowing' on the groomer.



Less grooming is better. IGK synthetic footings require minimal grooming — fewer passes mean less wear and longer footing life.

GROOMING FREQUENCY & PATTERNS

- Frequency: Light commercial facilities typically groom 1× per week, sometimes every 2 weeks.
- Alternate Patterns: Staff should alternate grooming direction and pattern to prevent footing from consistently migrating in one direction.
- Lunging: Avoid lunging in the same area repeatedly — it creates 'crop circles' that become tripping hazards. If lunging occurs, actively monitor footing level in those areas.

HORSE ACCLIMATION PERIOD

Horses typically require an adjustment period of one to two weeks when introduced to new footing. This is completely normal and expected.

- What to Expect: Horses are adjusting to the new feel and stability of the surface.
- Rider Experience: Riders may notice horses becoming more energetic during early rides — this is a natural response as horses recognize the footing is more stable and softer than what they are accustomed to.
- Recommendation: Monitor behavior during the acclimation window and allow horses time to adapt before drawing conclusions about footing performance.

ARENA CLEANLINESS & MANAGEMENT

- Manure Management: Require boarders and staff to pick up manure at the end of every ride.
- No Hay in Arena: Do not feed or store hay in the arena. Organic material buildup can create dust and degrade footing performance over time.

COLD WEATHER & ACCUMULATED COMPACTION

Like all materials subjected to repeated traffic, IGK footing will develop accumulated compaction over time — particularly noticeable in colder seasons when the surface can feel tighter or less responsive underfoot. This is a normal characteristic of any arena surface and is not a sign of product failure.



Accumulated compaction is most noticeable in cold weather. Understanding this cycle — and knowing the solution — allows you to maintain ideal riding conditions year-round.

- Deeper Ripper Setting: Occasionally, and based on need, lower the ripper teeth deeper than your standard setting to help separate and loosen lower layers that have become compacted.
- Technique: Drive slowly and systematically vary your grooming pattern, allowing the rippers to blend and reintegrate the lower layers back into the upper surface.
- Effect: This process restores the feel and resilience of the footing without requiring a full regrade.
- Seasonal Timing: Cold seasons are the most common trigger — a deeper rip pass before temperatures drop can help maintain footing performance through the winter months.
- Frequency: This is not a daily or weekly procedure. It is a situational tool — use it when the footing feels tight or compacted, not on a fixed schedule.



Think of this as a periodic 'reset' for the lower layer. Done correctly and as needed, it extends the life of your footing and keeps the surface performing at its best between full regrades.

PERIODIC REGRADE

Over time, even with proper grooming, footing will naturally migrate and minor high and low spots will develop. A periodic full regrade restores the surface to optimal condition.

- Frequency: Regrades are typically needed every 2–3 years.
- Duration: Each regrade session takes approximately 3–6 hours depending on arena size.
- When to Schedule: The clearest sign that a regrade is needed: visible deep and shallow areas where footing has migrated to one side or end of the arena.

Contact IGK Equestrian to schedule a regrade or discuss footing performance questions. Our team is available to support your facility.

EXTENDING THE LIFE OF YOUR FOOTING

One of the most significant advantages of IGK wax-based synthetic footing is that it is highly renewable. Unlike sand or fiber footings that degrade and must eventually be replaced entirely, IGK footings can be rejuvenated using proven techniques that restore the surface to near day-one conditions.

Footing Flip

Over time, the upper layer of footing absorbs the most traffic and wax attrition. A footing flip inverts the material — bringing the higher wax-content footing from the lower depths to the surface where it hasn't had contact. The result is an immediate and dramatic rejuvenation — fresh wax content at the surface that rides and performs like new footing.

Footing Adds

As footing depth gradually reduces through normal use, adding small amounts of fresh IGK wax footing — typically ½" to 1" depending on conditions — replenishes depth and reintroduces wax content throughout the surface. Even modest footing adds produce a remarkable rejuvenation effect, blending fresh and existing material to restore performance across the entire arena.



Used together — a footing flip followed by a targeted footing add — these two techniques can return a worn surface to day-one riding conditions. This is the most cost-effective lifespan extension available in the industry.

CRITICAL: DO NOT ALTER THE FORMULATION

⚠ Never add raw sand or raw fiber to an existing IGK footing. Introducing foreign materials disrupts the precision-engineered wax/sand/fiber ratio and can permanently compromise dust control and performance.

- No Raw Sand: Even in small quantities, raw sand tips the wax-to-sand ratio and degrades traction, consistency, and dust control.
- No Raw Fiber: Loose fiber alters the binding matrix, reducing cohesion and undermining the footing's structural performance.
- Correct Method: If depth or composition adjustment is needed, always use IGK wax footing in the appropriate concentration. This is the only safe way to modify an existing surface.

FOOTING SUBSCRIPTION SERVICE

IGK Equestrian offers subscription service options for ongoing footing maintenance and support. Visit igkequestrian.com to learn about available programs and current pricing.

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