

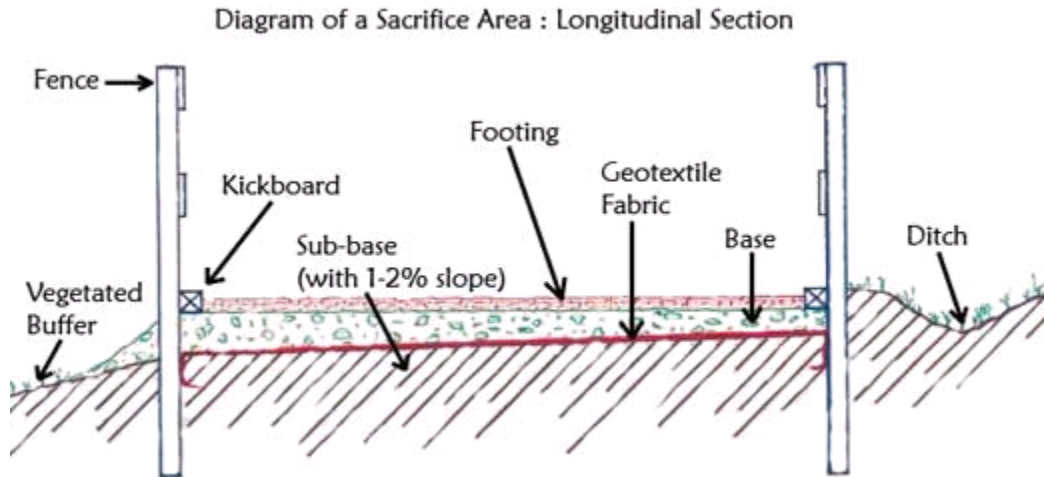
Quick tips and ideas for arena footings

- These are a few questions that you should know the answer to before you start looking to buy:
 - How many people and horses will ride this arena?
 - What am I willing to spend on maintenance?
 - How often will the arena be used?
 - What style of riding will take place in the arena?
 - Am I equipped to groom the arena?
 - Is dust going to be a problem?
 - How will I control dust?
 - Do I have access to water in the arena?
 - What am I willing to spend initially on footing?
 - Will the horses that ride in the arena be shod on a regular basis?
 - Do you want your arena to have stable, holding pen, etc attached?
- Sand should start at 2” and not exceed 5.5-6” as sand that is too deep can stress and damage ligaments. Starting at 2” gives you a good base and lets you add more based on preference.
- Lofting agents (rubber, fiber and wood) might also be a good idea, explore your options carefully for purpose and safety (impurities).
- Be aware that rubber additives can separate out of outdoor arena footings and rise to the surface removing any benefit of them being in the mix. This is especially true in our wet climate.
- Keep arena footing moist (8-20% moisture) down to three inches to control dust and manage compaction.
- Control dust by adding salt to the footing mix, approximately 20-50 lbs for 1000 square feet of arena surface. Examples are Calcium Chloride and Magnesium Chloride.
- Coated sand maybe a good footing option for you to control dust without using water, guard against freezing, and control consistency. Coated sand is sand that has been treated with a polymer coating; this makes a durable long lived footing but it can be very expensive!
- Complete a “Sand Test” to determine the real make-up of the sand you have purchased or are thinking of purchasing. In a glass jar (think canning jar) place two inches of sand, fill the jar with water and stir vigorously for at least one minute. The sand will settle to the bottom (after you’ve stopped stirring) and what

is left floating around are fines, sometimes called fills. The color of the water is also a good indicator of fines is in your sand. The darker the color the more fines. Let's say that you have one inch of sand in the bottom of the jar, then the sand you purchased is really only 50% sand.

- Not having 100% sand is not all bad. Most horse owners prefer to have a ratio somewhere between 80%-20% (sand/fill) and 70%-30%.
- Ask around and see if anyone in the area has an arena footing that you are interested in, ask to take a test ride. Often companies will have "test ride" clients in a variety of areas to facilitate the selling their products.
- Jargon: Stone Dust = Blue Stone = Limestone Screenings = Rock Dust. Wood = Shavings = Chips = Shredded Bark = Hog Fuel = Shredded Fibers = Sawdust.
- Base preparation is VERY important! There should be a 1-2% slope on the sub-base. The base should also have a compacted density around 92% to hold up against the horse's body weight. A guideline of depth to the compacted base layer (not to be confused with the depth of footing materials) is:

Low Impact < 4-6" -----6-12" > High Impact



- Arena sizes vary based on purpose. Here is a table of some common arena sizes.

Standard Multi-Purpose	Driving Arenas	Competition jumping
70 x 130"	130 x 260"	660 x 660"
70 x 200"	130 x 330"	
100 x 200"		

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