



Nail Trimming in Dogs

Most dogs need to have their nails trimmed approximately once monthly, though this can vary depending on your dog's activity, natural filing on pavement/concrete during daily walks, etc.

RULE OF THUMB: your dog needs a nail trim if the nails touch the ground when standing/walking, and you can hear clicking/tapping on the floor while walking.

- ❖ In most cases, it is easier to trim your dog's nails if you have someone to help. Having a helper to keep your dog still will reduce the likelihood of you trimming a nail too short, causing bleeding, or stress to your dog.
- ❖ First, examine your dog's nails. If your dog has light-colored nails, you should be able to see the quick (pink in color) within the nail. Your goal is to cut approximately 2-3 mm away from the quick, to avoid causing your dog pain. If your dog has dark nails, you may not be able to see the quick; in this case, trim just the very tip/hook off of the nail. Through a series of small cuts, removing 1-2 mm of nail with each clip, you can gradually work the nail back to a shorter length while minimizing the likelihood of cutting the quick. Aim to make your final cut at or near the point where the nail begins to curve, but stop sooner if you encounter the quick.
- ❖ Despite your best efforts, it is possible that you will occasionally cut the quick when trimming nails, causing bleeding. If this happens, you can apply a small amount of styptic powder (available at petstores or online) to the end of your dog's nail to stop the bleeding.

In a pinch, you may use corn starch, flour, or baking powder/soda.

- ❖ Many dogs do not love having their paws touched, and may resist strongly. Though, most dogs can be trained or desensitized to tolerate (and sometimes even enjoy!) nail trims. In most cases, the way to a dog's heart is through his stomach. Rewarding your dog during each step of the nail trim, or throughout, can be quite helpful – this can be done by giving treats (either putting

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them on the floor in front of you dog, having the holder give treats, or even smearing a small amount of peanut butter or cheese whiz on a surface (bathtub wall, floor, cabinet, lick mat, etc).

- ❖ Go at your dog's pace. Begin the process of gradually acclimating your dog to nail trims. The first few days, you might use treats and praise to work up to the goal of simply being able to touch your dog's feet without them panicking. Once you can easily handle his feet, use treats to build up to trimming just one nail. Continue trimming one nail at a sitting until your dog seems calm with that approach, then gradually work up to trimming two or three nails at a time, then an entire paw at one time. After several weeks of consistent daily effort, you should reach a point where your dog will allow you to complete an entire nail trim in one sitting.
- ❖ A note on nail GRINDING: Some dogs tolerate nail filing or grinding better than clipping. It creates a smooth tip to the nail, and there is less risk of accidentally cutting your dog's quick.

***WORDS OF CAUTION:**

- HUMAN HAIR AND LONG DOG FUR can easily become entangled in the dremel, so it is important to use caution!!
- The file can cause skin burns if it comes into contact with human or animal skin
- The dust created by nail grinding can act as a respiratory irritant so it may be best to do this outside or in a well-ventilated area.

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