



Trimming Nails 101

Trimming your dog's nails is an important part in keeping your pet healthy and pain free. Long nails can be painful to walk on for your dog and if left too long for extended periods they can cause arthritis, joint pain, and they may even grow back into their paw pads...ouch! Below are the basics to know about trimming nails and helpful tips to making the experience better for both human and animal.

Supplies Needed:

1. Nail trimmers (pictured left to right)
 - a. Roscoe
 - b. Millers forge
 - c. Dremmel or file
 - d. Large (human variety) nail trimmers
2. Kwik Stop, corn starch, or flour (stops bleeding)
3. +/- Holder
4. +/- peanut butter or other tasty treat (positive reinforcement)

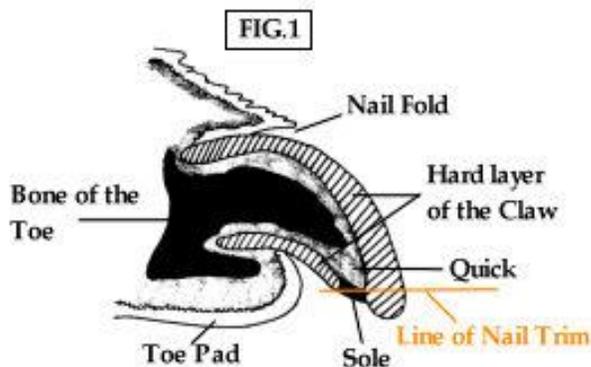


General information:

- o Nails *should not* "clickity-clack" across the floor
- o Every dog is different – some nails are naturally short and others long
 - Learn your dog's natural quick and maintain it
- o When *cutting* the nail it should be at a *parallel angle with the foot pad* (not with clippers angled downward), as shown by the yellow line in the diagram
- o Use **sharp clippers....dull clippers pinch** more instead of cut

Tricks

- Some nails grow past the quick to an extreme point and are thinner than nail base....cut off the sharp point (see image)
- Make small cuts up the nail until you notice a black spot appear; this means the quick is close....stop cutting. Sometimes





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this spot is difficult to see without practice, so be careful

- Nails that are really light in color will have a pink spot
- Walking your dog on hard surfaces such as concrete sidewalks will naturally trim your dog's nails eliminating the need for you to do it.
 - Asphalt is not hard enough and doesn't work well as a natural nail file
- Putting *peanut butter*, or other *tasty treat*, in front of your pet may help distract them from what you are doing and can act as a *positive reinforcement*
 - I like to spread out peanut butter on the floor so it takes longer to lick up
- By doing small trimmings *every 1-2 weeks* it's *easier to maintain proper nail length*
- If you accidentally quick the nail causing it to bleed pack in a small amount of Kwik Stop (found at most pet stores), corn starch, or flour
- Here are a couple of helpful videos for nail trims
 - http://drsophiayin.com/videos/entry/training_a_dog_to_enjoy_toenail_trims
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7cq5X8aV95E>

For dogs that don't like nail trim time:

- Please watch the above video by Dr. Sophia Yin – great for showing how to counter-condition dogs to accepting nail trims
- Take it slow and don't push the animal too far
- Go to your veterinarian or groomer for assistance – they are trained to restrain and handle animals and trim the nails without causing injury to themselves or the pet
- Light sedation or tranquilizer may be required in some cases for dogs that become very aggressive with the handler.
- As a vet tech I like to make sure all animals going under anesthesia get a nail trim before they wake up
 - If you know your dog has long quicks before a procedure requiring anesthesia you can request that the nails be “quicked” while they are asleep – this cuts quicks back to proper length and the animal will not be in any discomfort

Please remember EVERY dog is different and you need to be able to recognize when they are too stressed so that injury to yourself and/or the pet can be avoided. Veterinary and grooming professionals have been trained to carry out many procedures, including nail trims, so don't be afraid to ask for help.



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