

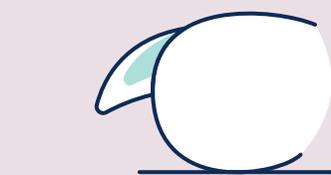
A Pet Parent's Guide to Dog Nail Care

In this guide, you'll learn all about dog nail care—and what to do in an emergency.

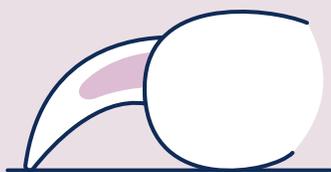
Dog Nail Care Essentials

Dog nail trimming is made much easier with the right tools and resources. The following can help you care for your pup's paws:

- A friend or family member to help hold your dog and keep them calm
- A relaxing, quiet spot with good lighting to clip their nails
- Dog nail clippers or a dog nail grinder
- Styptic powder
- High-value dog treats to reward your pet during and after their nail trim
- A lick mat with peanut butter or a spreadable dog treat to distract your pet



Ideal Length



Too Long

How Short Should I Clip My Dog's Nails?

Before you start clipping, you'll want to know how short to trim dog nails.

This varies from dog to dog, but generally, you'll want to cut your dog's nails as short as possible without hitting the corium, or the quick, the area inside of a dog's nail that is filled with blood vessels and nerves.

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How To Trim Your Dog's Nails

Once you've secured all the right tools to trim your dog's nails, you're ready to get started.

1 Introduce Your Pup to the Nail Clipper or Grinder

Take a pair of nail clippers and just touch your dog's foot with it for a little while before you attempt to clip.

Give your pup plenty of treats when they encounter the clippers or grinder, so they develop a positive association.

2 Position Your Dog

Position your dog in a way that's most comfortable for you both—whether it's sitting, standing, or laying down.

Don't lift your pup's leg up out of its normal range of motion.

To avoid discomfort and potential injury, keep your dog's paw close to the surface your pet is resting on.

3 Watch Out for the Quick

Cutting the quick can be painful for your dog and cause bleeding, so it's important to identify the quick and avoid cutting it.

If you're unsure, or if your dog has dark nails and you can't quite see the vessels, book an appointment for their nail trim at your veterinarian's office.

4 Start Small, Go Slow, and Cut Vertically

Cut the nail vertically following the nail's angle—at about a 45-degree angle.

If your dog is particularly anxious, it can help to start by trimming just a few nails per sitting until they get more comfortable with the process.

And don't forget the dewclaws (the small, extra nails located on the inner side of a dog's paws).

5 Offer Your Pup a Treat

The more positive reinforcement you can give your dog during and after nail trimming, the better.

Offer lots of praise and love throughout the process and keep plenty of treats on hand for when they're done with their trim.

Trim Nail
at 45° Angle



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What To Do If Your Dog's Nail Is Bleeding, Broken, or Cracked

If you accidentally cut your dog's quick or your pup's nail is broken or bleeding, don't panic!

Here's what to do:

Stay calm and reassure your cat—your demeanor will help keep them steady.

- 1 Stay calm and reassure your pup—your demeanor will help keep them steady.
- 2 Apply styptic powder, a styptic gel swab, or a styptic pencil. These products act as astringents/cauterants to promote clotting and stop bleeding fast.
- 3 If you don't have styptic powder on hand, press cornstarch or flour onto the tip of the nail as a backup. You can also gently drag the nail across a bar of unscented, preferably antibacterial soap to stop the bleeding as well.
- 4 Apply gentle but firm pressure with a clean cloth or gauze for a few minutes.
- 5 Keep your dog still long enough for the blood to clot.
- 6 Discourage licking, giving the clot time to form. Use a recovery collar or briefly cover the paw with a clean sock secured loosely with tape. Bacteria in the mouth also will cause the nailbed to get infected, so a protective collar is essential.
- 7 Once bleeding stops, keep the nail tip clean and protected for a few hours, limiting running and rough play.



When To Call Your Vet

Most instances of dog nail bleeding can be managed at home, but there are situations that require professional care.

If any of the following happen, call your vet:

- The bleeding doesn't stop within 20 minutes.
- Your dog is limping, licking excessively, or guarding their paw.
- The nail is badly broken or torn, with the quick or nail bed exposed. This can be very painful, and your vet may recommend pain medication.
- You notice any signs of infection, such as redness, swelling, or discharge. This may require an antibiotic prescribed by your vet.