

## The Importance of Nail Trimming

Your pet's feet are important! Nail care should be a regular part of your grooming regime to prevent cracked and broken nails. Take time to check your pet's feet especially in the winter. It is important to keep nails cut short as these are the sorts of problems that can develop into a much worse scenario requiring veterinary care.

Long nails not only can get caught on something and rip in the most inconvenient place on the foot but they also change the way your pet walks. With long nails pounding into the ground it puts excessive pressure on bones and tendons. This can cause joint and ligament problems leading to lameness. Nails tend to grow out straight and then downward into a curve, so keeping them clipped ensures that they don't grow into the pads of the feet. Also keeping the pads of the feet healthy by keeping the hair clipped short on the bottoms will help keep the snow from balling up and packing in between the toes. In addition to checking the pads of the feet you should also check in between the toes for any mats that may be present.

How often your pet's nails need to be trimmed depends on his lifestyle but for most pets it is every 4-6 weeks. However, some pets that walk on pavement regularly require fewer trimmings as they tend to wear the nail down.

Nails need to be trimmed as far back as possible without cutting into the quick. If the nails are only clipped on the ends it will cause the quick to grow further down making it impossible to keep a healthy, short nail. Trimming white nails are easy as the quick can be seen. Trimming black nails is more difficult as you cannot see the quick at all. With black nails, trim small amounts at a time until you see a little white dot that is the end of the quick.

If you accidentally cut too far back quickly apply a small amount of septic powder (found at most pet stores) and apply pressure for 1 full minute until the bleeding stops. If you don't have septic powder flour can be used as a substitute.

If you are nervous or unsure on how to trim your pet's nails have your groomer or veterinarian show you how to do it. Or simply take your pet in and have them done. Most veterinarians and groomers charge a small fee for this service. The this small fee can prevent you from having to pay a big fee later on should something happen.

Healthy feet mean a happy pet!

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