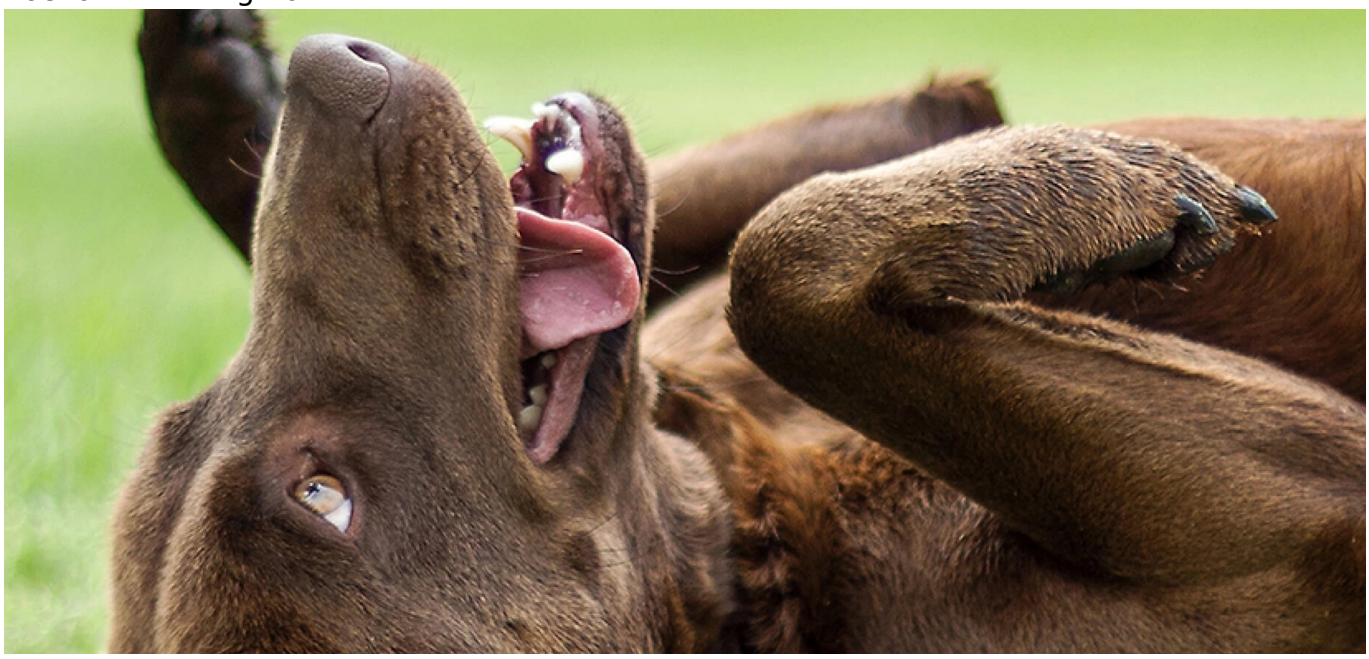
Toenail trimming 101



Grooming resources

Toenail trimming 101

An essential part of dog grooming—even if they don’t enjoy it so much.

HOW TO TRIM YOUR DOG’S TOENAILS

When you hear the familiar click-click-click as your dog walks across the kitchen floor, it might be time to trim their toenails. However much your dog may dislike having their feet touched, toenail trimming is an essential part of caring for your dog. If nails get too long, they can start to curl under and cause problems for little paws. This is especially true if your dog has any dew claws, which are generally on the inside of a dog's front legs (and some dogs have them on the hind legs as well). These claws are most at risk from overgrowth as they tend to only get worn when a dog runs (and the type of surface they run on will have an impact on how long they grow).

Finding the right toenail trimmer.

Never use human nail clippers on a dog's nails. They compress the nail flat, which causes pain and leaves the dog with a poorly angled cut. Instead, look for one of these options,

which are ideal for canine toenails.

Guillotine style: This style is recommended for smaller dogs because the design makes it easy to insert the nail. Essentially, the nail is passed through a metal hoop at the end of the trimmer. As the handles close, a metal trimmer slides across the metal loop and trims the nail. Some people find this squeeze-type closure easier to use than scissor-type handles. If you use this type of trimmer, make sure you change the blades frequently.

Miller's forge trimmers: These trimmers look similar to scissors with blades that have semicircular indentations. When the blades are opened, the semicircles make a circular opening into which the nail is placed. With the nail in position, the handles are closed and the nail is trimmed. Miller's forge trimmers are stronger than the guillotine style and they do not have blades that need to be replaced. However, the handles are far apart and can be difficult to operate for people with small hands.

Toenail trimming tips.

Here are a few ways to make the process as painless as possible for you and your dog:

Start young. The earlier you start clipping your dog's claws, the more used to it they'll be. Watch a professional first. If you've never cut a dog's toenails before, get a lesson from your vet, vet's assistant or a professional groomer.

Pair nail trimming with positive reinforcement. Help make nail trims a more enjoyable activity for your dog by pairing them with rewards such as treats. Start off by allowing your dog to become accustomed to having their feet touched. By training your dog to offer their paw ('shake paws') you're off to a great start. Continue to pair handling with treats as you slowly and gradually help your dog to view nail trims in a more positive manner.

Avoid cutting the nails too short. You never want to cut into the 'quick' (the pink nail bed area seen in colourless nails). Cutting this area causes pain and bleeding.

Clip toenails when your dog is tired. After a workout or vigorous play session is a good time to clip your dog's nails. Try to avoid clipping when they're feeling most energetic, such as in the morning.

Try different positions. Some dogs are comfortable lying on their sides, while others feel less vulnerable sitting up or even standing. You can even try cutting your small dog's toes on a table top or with his back towards you in your lap. If your dog has hairy feet, pull the hair aside or trim it away from the nails. This will make it much easier to see what you're doing. If your dog is squirmy, you might need the help of a handler.

Above all, **try to make trimming fun and not a struggle.** If your pet is not used to having their nails trimmed, start slowly and work up to it gradually. Always use positive

reinforcement, and in time, your dog may grow to actually enjoy their pedicures.

Source URL:
https://www.pedigree.co.nz/our-help-hub/grooming-resources/toenail-trimming-101