

# Trimming Your Pet's Nails

**Best Friends Animal Hospital**

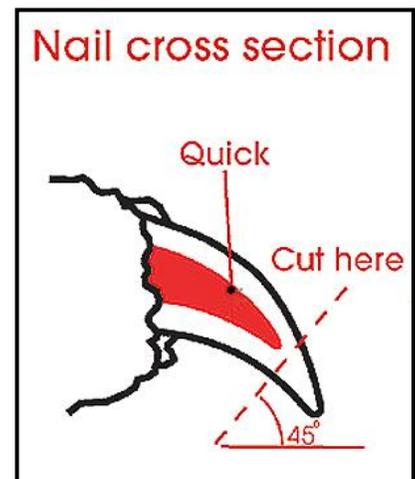
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## Maintaining short, healthy nails:

Untrimmed nails can cause a variety of problems including broken nails that can be very painful and often become infected and can result in an expensive vet visit. Nails can grow so long they curl around and can grow into the foot pad and is extremely painful. Long nails can be very slippery on the ice also. Trim nails as often as once every 2 weeks, this varies with every animal. A good indication that your dog's nails are too long is the telltale "click-click" sound on uncarpeted floors.

## To trim your pet's nails:

1. There are many different types of trimmers, it is very important that the trimmer is sharp and cuts the nail quickly without pinching the nail. You will also need some styptic powder, Kwik-Stop, Cutstop or another product to stop bleeding if you nip the quick. If you trim nails nipping the quick will happen now and then.
2. You may have your pet on the floor, your lap or a table, it works best with 2 people. Hold out the paw in a comfortable position and gently squeeze the pad and the nail will extend. Try to locate the quick on white nails it is easily seen as the pink area but on dark nails its usually not seen.
3. You will be taking off the hook at the end of the nail, you will make several small nips instead of one larger one. Trim very thin slices off the end of the nail until you start seeing a fleshy looking area, this is the start of the quick that you want to avoid. The bonus to trimming the nails more often is the quick will retract into nail further, allowing you to cut shorter each time. Remember to always trim the dewclaws if your pet has them, they often are longer because they never come in contact with the walking surface. They can grow so long they curl into the pad and cause a painful ingrown toenail.
4. If your pet is not tolerating the trimming very well, take a break. It can also be very helpful to give **TREATS** during the trimming so your pet looks forward to getting them trimmed instead of fearing it.



## Some helpful hints:

- Invest in a good set of trimmers appropriate for your pet's size, a good pair will last a long time. It is better to trim small amounts on a regular basis than larger amounts. The longer the nail get the longer the quick will become and the smaller the amount can be trimmed without nipping the quick and causing bleeding.
- Try to make trimming time fun, not a struggle. If your pet is not used to having his nails trimmed, start slowly by just holding his toes and not having the trimmer in site. Gradually have the trimmer out when you're holding his paws, you may also give treats during these sessions. Then begin by just trimming one nail and praising and giving treats, you can gradually work up to trimming all the nails in one session.