

Nail Trimming

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Nail trimming can be an emotional event for not only yourself and your dog, but certainly for your groomer, veterinarian or whoever else you rely on to trim your dogs nails. If you have ever drawn blood while trimming your dog's nails, you know very well that each attempt afterward becomes increasingly difficult.

The "kwik" is that area inside the dog's nail where the blood supply to the nail is maintained. As the nail grows longer, the kwik also increases in size, thereby providing blood near the tip of the nail. One of the reasons accidental nipping of the kwik occurs is because the nails have been allowed to grow too long. What many people don't know is that the size of the kwik can be reduced by gradually and steadily trimming the nails until they are at the optimum length.

The following diagrams illustrate how this can be done.

Diagram 1
Relationship between
the "kwik" and the rest
of the dog's nail

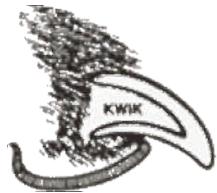


Diagram 2
A properly trimmed
nail

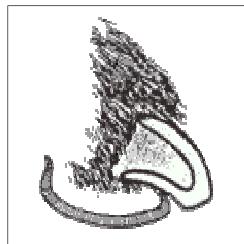
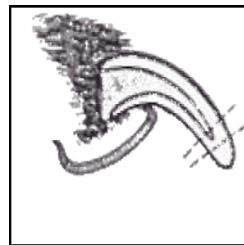


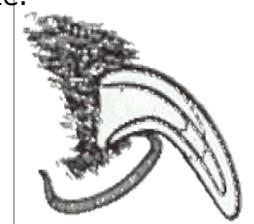
Diagram 3
Excessively long nail



Note that the kwik grows with the nail. A cut too long will cause bleeding and the nail will still be too long.

A shorter trim will avoid the kwik and cause the kwik to begin reducing in size.

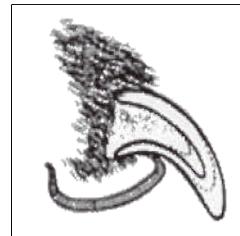
Diagram 4
Receding kwik



By clipping or filing a little off a long nail every few days, the blood supply will continue to recede.

As the nail gets shorter so does the blood supply

Diagram 5
Receding kwik



How often nails need trimming will depend on how much time your dog spends on cement and other hard surfaces, which wear them down naturally. If your dog is usually indoors, his nails will need to be monitored regularly. Nails left to grow unchecked can become painful and disfiguring; eventually, they can even cause the feet to become splayed and twisted.

Beginners may find the plier-type nail trimmer with cutting guard, allowing you to trim a little at a time, the easiest to use for most breeds. Always replace dull nail trimmers (or blades) to avoid crushing, rather than cutting, the nail.

Dark nails have a faint line and dull colour where the quick begins. Only practice makes you faster and better at determining how much to take off. Always have styptic powder available (to stop bleeding), just in case you cut the quick. Try to avoid cutting the nails so short that they bleed. It is better to trim a bit from the nail weekly to force the quick to recede.