



GROOMING & TOENAIL CLIPPING

Every dog will need grooming, some more than others. Begin by getting your puppy accustomed to having all areas of his body handled. It is much easier to teach a puppy to accept handling than to teach it to a full-grown adult. Start with short periods, praising the puppy when you are able to accomplish a couple of brush strokes. Brush the coat—not the skin. Too rough brushing hurts and can result in red, inflamed skin called “brush burn”. Brush burn can also result from brushing correctly, but for long periods such as in an effort to detangle a very matted coat. Once your puppy is accepting of short grooming sessions, the length of time you spend brushing can gradually increase. Sort through all the different brushes and combs on the market can be confusing. Ask the breeder of your pup what to use, or get advice at your local pet supply store about the best kind of grooming tools to use for you pup’s type of coat.



BATHING

Puppies tend to be more sensitive to shampoos and conditioners, so be sure to use products made specifically for dogs. Do not use products designed for human hair or dishwashing soap. Don’t mix products, such as flea soap followed by flea dip. If you notice excessive salivation, a change in pupil size, vomiting or diarrhea after using a flea shampoo, dip or any product with an insecticide, rinse the dog thoroughly with warm water and call the veterinarian immediately. It is a good idea to apply sterile ophthalmic ointment to the dog’s eyes before bathing to prevent irritation, even if you use a “no tears” shampoo.

EARS

Ears should be checked on a regular basis, especially during the summer months. In dogs with hairy, drop ears or heavy ear leathers, the ear canal becomes a long, dark moist tube with limited air flow. To prevent ear canal infections and hearing loss, it is important to routinely clean the ear canals. There are special cleaners which help dissolve the wax and clean the canal. Your vet can show you how to use them on your puppy.

TEETH & GUMS

Handle your puppy’s mouth often. Gently lift the lips and look at the teeth and gums. Get him used to having human fingers touching his teeth, tongue and gums. Dogs, like people, benefit from a regular program of dental care. Adult dogs have 42 teeth and the proper care of these teeth is important to prevent gum disease. Dry, hard food and treats help scrape unwanted plaque and tartar from the teeth. Providing chews, such as sterilized bones and Nylabones help massage and clean gums. You can also brush the teeth using a dog toothbrush and toothpaste that is manufactured specifically for dogs. If you begin the handling and cleaning process early and maintain it, many dogs come to enjoy the experience.

TOENAIL CLIPPING

Dogs need to have their nails trimmed on a regular basis. Toenail clipping is an essential part of keeping a dog well groomed. It is a procedure that is often ignored by many dog owners or avoided because they don't know how to perform the task or get their dog to accept it. There are few dogs who accept nail trimming from the start. If their nails are allowed to grow too long, however, it can affect the shape of the puppy's feet and cause them discomfort. If your dog's toenails click when he walks across a hard surface, they are too long. He should not be walking on his toenails. That is bad for your dog's feet. Nail clipping will be easier if introduced to your puppy gradually. It is important to start early by first getting your puppy used to having his feet and toes handled.

Start by gently and firmly holding the puppy's paw for one or two seconds. When grasping his paw, be careful not to pull his leg into an unnatural position or to get such a death grip on his foot that you are hurting him. Reward him with a treat and praise for remaining calm and passive while you hold his paw. Gradually extend the length of time you can manipulate the paw. If he struggles too much, you should go back to working on getting your puppy to remain quiet while having all parts of his body handled. Until he gets comfortable with this, you will find it difficult to trim toenail. If you are going to use a clipper to trim your puppy's nails, be sure that you show him the nail clipper and touch his nails with it in a non-threatening manner many times BEFORE you even attempt to cut his nails with it. Again, reward your puppy with a treat and praise for accepting this in a quiet manner. If the puppy is tolerating the simple touching of the clipper to his nails, you can then squeeze the trimmer gently around the nail and release the pressure. Do not actually trim the nail until after the puppy is completely comfortable with this process. Your goal is to make the process of nail clipping a non-frightening experience for the puppy.

Clipping a nail too short and causing it to bleed isn't necessarily cause for alarm. If you r puppy has light-colored nails, lucky you! It is easy to see where the quick ends and where to cut. The quick (the sensitive membrane that surrounds the blood vessel inside the nail), generally ends where the nail starts to curve down. You will probably be safe if you cut off only the hooked ends of the nails every two weeks. Don't panic if you cut a little too close and one of the nails starts to bleed. The puppy may let out a little yelp when this happens and pull his paw away. **DO NOT OVERREACT AND FUSS OVER YOUR PUP IF THIS HAPPENS.** Be calm. If you don't make a big deal of it, the puppy won't either. Apply some pressure on the nail with a paper towel until the bleeding stops or apply a special styptic powder made for this purpose.

The dotted line indicates the proper place to cut the toenail.



NAIL TRIMMING and the BLOOD SUPPLY (KWIK) OF THE NAILS of the DOG

Clipping your dog's toenails is generally a simple routine, like combing, ear-cleaning, and washing, that you've trained the pet since puppyhood to accept calmly. But there are always exceptions, including the otherwise docile and obedient dog that simply will not tolerate having toenails clipped or even, in some cases, having its feet handled at all. Sometimes this aversion can be traced to a painful experience involving the nails or feet.

Begin by first touching the dog on its leg or the place closest to the nails that does not cause it to object. Reward this tolerance with a very small, very tasty bit of food. Next, touch just a little closer, and again give a small food reward. Repeat, perhaps many times, each time moving closer to the toes and stopping when the dog seems about to begin to resent the intrusion.

At the second session, which should be on the following day, begin again. When the dog finally allows you to touch its toes, move on to the next necessary step: picking up the foot. When this can be done without arousing objection, touch the toenail clipper to the toes. Remember to reward the desired behavior as you progress.

Eventually, you should be allowed to being clipping, one nail at a time. Proceed with clipping one nail a day, after rewarding the dog for allowing you to touch and handle the feet. If you have the time and patience, learn to recognize how far you can go with each day's training and remember to reward the dog of its acceptance of his training. In time, the dog should submit to a routine pedicure.

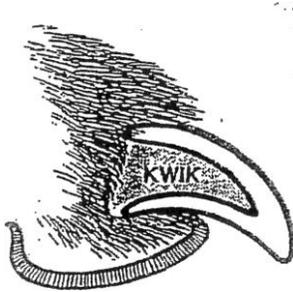


Diagram 1: The blood supply (Kwik) in the short nail.

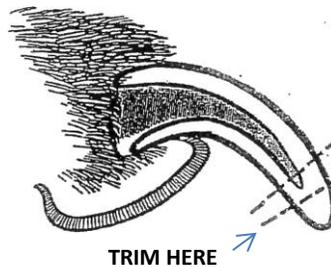


Diagram 2: Note how the blood supply gets long as the nail grows.

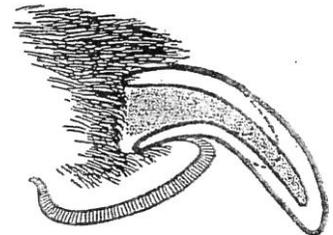


Diagram 3: If you clip or file a little off of a long nail every few days, the blood supply will continue to recede.

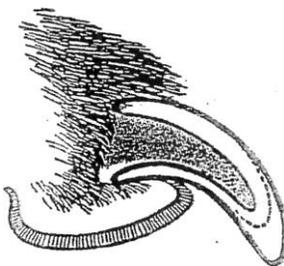


Diagram 4: As the nail get shorter so does the blood supply.

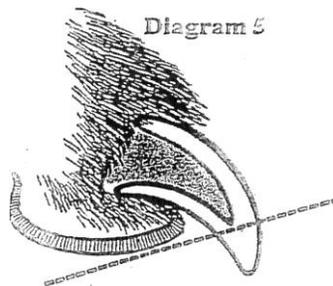


Diagram 5: Only when the nail is kept short can it be trimmed without bleeding. If the same cut had been made on the long nail in Diagram 2, it would have caused bleeding.

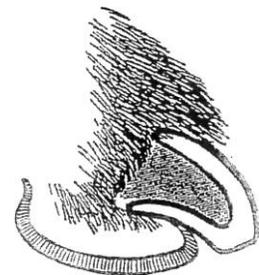


Diagram 6: A properly trimmed nail