

Stress free nail clipping with massage
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There are many health benefits for dogs to have regularly clipped nails, not just to make them look good

Keeping your dog's nails at a clean short and comfortable length aids in better gait, posture for sitting as well as standing. Reduces arthritis and inflammation of the joints as well as the spinal column, as well as the major organs. Inside every nail is a vein and if cut too short it will bleed. If not cut frequently the vein will grow with the nail and become longer which could curl underneath to the pad or twist and curl to the sides of toe connecting with the other nails.

"Common cause of nail disorders in dogs that are caused by not getting their nails cut back often enough; Infection such as bacteria or fungus, trauma, Immune system disease, Tumor or cancer." (https://www.petmd.com/dog/conditions/skin/c_multi_nail_nailbed_disorder).

"Dog's nails consist of two layers. They have the unguis, a hard, outer covering in which the keratin fibers run perpendicular to the direction in which the nail grows. But unlike us, under their unguis, dogs have the subunguis, which is softer and flaky, with a grain that is parallel to the direction of growth. The faster growth of the unguis is what gives the dog's nail its characteristic curl." (<https://www.whole-dog-journal.com/care/nail-clipping/the-importance-of-clipping-dogs-nails/>).

Certain massage techniques can help some dogs that get anxiety for nail trimming or grooming experiences. It can calm nerves, relax the dogs body and allow the dog to understand that getting their nails trimmed and feet groomed is a good and calming technique to help them get used to this process. Dogs that have been to grooming salons, or vet clinics to have nail work done sometimes have had a bad experience and then the dog is required to either be muzzled or sedated just to get this job done.

Certain breeds of dogs have no issues of having their paws touched let alone having the nails trimmed or grinded down, some dogs prefer the grinding rather than the clipping of the nail. Most of the breeds in the working and sporting group are not fond of having their nails done and their paws touched, held, or pads shaved of hair. Whereas breeds in the toy, non-sporting group are used to the process due to possibility of starting the grooming process early on in their life. Certain breeders start at a young age with getting the puppies used to being held, paws touched, nails trimmed, paw pad hair shaved out. After working with three dogs from the working group and three dogs from the sporting group over the time period of a month they went from being uncomfortable and having to be muzzled to get the nail process done for them to no muzzle and actually enjoy coming into the salon for their nails to be done. The dogs would come in every two weeks to get their nails either clipped or grinded down, they were not only doing this to get their dogs used to the process but to train the vein inside the nail to grow back, this prevents the dogs nails from becoming too long, and when trimming them there will be less chances of the vein being cut and bleeding. Thus, causing pain and horror for the dog.

The massage of the paws for the dogs started out as only lasting a few seconds, then got built up to 2-3 mins, further doing it was able to do it for 5-7 mins without the dog getting upset or agitated and wanted to bite the groomer etc. The final massages were lasting the length of the nail trimming appointment 10-15 mins depending on the dog and what all needed to be done. In the end all except maybe one of the dogs were more comfortable with the nail trimming process as well as their paws being touched and held for more than a few seconds. The approach of taking the paw is very important

as well, most dogs I have notice don't like to be grabbed from the front, but gently running your hands down their legs picking the paw up from the back and gently bending the paw towards the back in the motion as to working with it.

**** I couldn't obtain any pictures of the dogs feet during this test, pet parents wouldn't allow, nor wanted to sign anything for me to able to do this test and share pictures about it for a school paper**** I did try the same technique on my cats at home when I go to trim their nails, and it has improved on two of my cats and it is now much easier to do their nails than it was able to be done before or at all, I was taking them to the vet once a month just to keep up with their nail trimming. The massage technique can also work on cats as long as you work with them, cats are different than dogs usually its their way or no way and most cats don't do well with any type of new change unless you continue with it.

