

How Often Should You Cut Your Dog's Nails?

Dr. Beth Turner

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Most people love getting manicures and pedicures. Dogs, not so much! But if we can create the same relaxing and positive experience for our dog as we get at the salon, they may grow to love it — or at least tolerate it.

Check out our article [How to Get Your Dog Used to Nail Trims](#) for tips to help your dog if they are nervous about getting their nails done.

Creating the right ambiance includes developing confidence in one's ability to trim your dog's nails properly (remember, dogs will notice when you're nervous) and knowing what essentials are needed to make it a good experience. But one of the questions I get asked most often about dog nails is how often should they be trimmed?

How Often Should You Clip Your Dog's Nails?

Cutting your dog's nails frequently will cause the quick to recede and allow the nails to be trimmed shorter. So, if it's possible and practical to trim your dog's nails weekly or at least every other week, you'll likely see better results, have a much less stressed dog, and experience less stress yourself in the process.



The quick is the part of a dog's nail that contains blood vessels and nerves. It's more easily seen through clear nails. As exemplified in this photo, the quick is not detectable in the black nail. However, it is the pink part of the clear nail. This is the part you want to avoid.

A good rule of thumb is that you should trim your dog's nails or have them trimmed as often as it takes to prevent their nails from touching the ground when they're standing (just like in the photo at the top of this article).



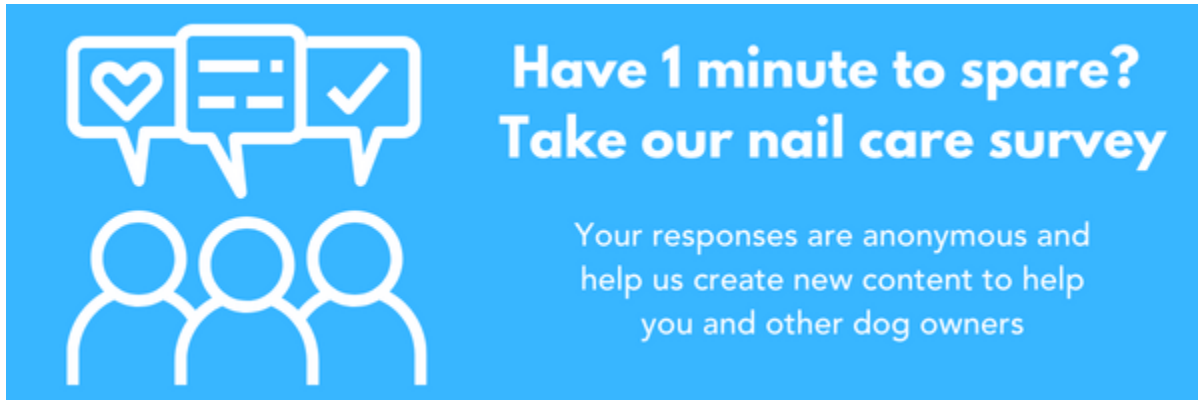
While this frequency will be different for each dog, there are some other factors that affect how often you need to clip your dog's nails:

The type of surface your dog spends most of their time on: Are they indoors mostly and only touching carpet? Outdoors on grass, dirt, or concrete pad? Do they spend most of their day in your arms or on the couch? Or do they go for frequent walks on asphalt or concrete? The harder the surface they walk on most of the time, the more their nails will wear down.

The type of activities they do: Do they dig? Do they do agility or other sports? Same as the surfaces they walk on, certain activities wear down dog nails more.

What your dog eats: Your dog's nutrition, particularly the balance of certain minerals and vitamins, can have an impact on the health and growth rate of your dog's nails. If your dog is well nourished, their nails are typically stronger and less brittle.

Certain health conditions: Dogs can get nail bed bacterial infections, fungal infections, autoimmune disorders, food and environmental allergies, and tumors that can affect the health and growth rate of their nails.



What to Do if You Cut Your Dog's Nail Too Short

Aim to take enough off of each nail to keep it short, yet not so much that you cut the quick (blood supply) or the nerve endings that extend just beyond the leading edge of the quick. You might hear this referred to as "quicking" your dog's nails. This happens when you cut the blood vessel (called the quick), and it happens more frequently with dogs that squirm a lot during nail trims, as well as with dogs with black nails because it is easier to see the quick in dogs with clear nails.

Should you ever cut your dog's nails too short — which many people, including professionals, have done — you'll want to have something on hand to stop the bleeding. Always keep something on hand to stop the bleeding, including a towel, and have it beside you when trimming, as the quick can bleed quite a lot when cut.

You can use styptic powder like [Kwik-Stop](#) or, even better, [ClotIt](#) (a blood-clotting accelerant that you should also have in your dog's first-aid kit). In a pinch, though, you can also use cornstarch pressed onto the nail and hold for a few minutes to stop the nail from bleeding.

Check out our list of [vet-recommended items to put in your dog's first-aid kit](#).

Kwik Stop Styptic Powder



ClotIt Veterinary Blood-Stopping Powder

