



Five Top Tips for Trimming your Dog's Nails!

By Katie Bedrossian – Pet Behaviour Consultant

While many people love going to the salon for a mani or pedi, our canine companions don't understand that their nails sometimes need grooming too. The process of having to stay still while someone touches a sensitive body part (such as feet and nails) can be a bit much for some dogs. Some dogs wear their nails down effectively on walks, however dogs who are smaller, lighter or have a different walking gait will need nail trims as well to keep the nails healthy and less prone to breakage and discomfort.

So what's the best technique for how to clip dog nails?

Read on for **5 tips that make nail clipping easier** for both yourself and your dog!

1. Start with having two people available, one to hold and one to clip. A third person can be beneficial to give treats.
2. Clip nails in a position your dog is comfortable. This may require a bit of experimentation. Some dogs love lying on their backs resting on your legs while you sit on the floor, some dogs prefer the freedom of standing on the floor as the choice means they don't panic and some prefer being on a table with a non-slip mat as they calm down due to not seeing the table as a play area.
3. Always start with massaging, stroking and scratching your dog in a spot they enjoy being petted. This may be a belly rub (if they are lying on their back on your legs) or a neck/shoulder rub or a scratch on the rump before you slowly move your hands towards the paw and nails.
4. Clip one paw at a time and give your dog play or social breaks in between. Less is more when it comes to trimming nails and applying a small amount of pressure on the area you plan to trim before clipping, will allow your dog to let you know if you have gone too high, without causing injury.
5. Associate the nail clipping with treats. Moist treats always work better than dry and sticky lickable treats (like Peanut Butter, Kong paste or Vegemite) are better still. Licky mats work well for this as you can suction it to a glass door or the fridge at your dog's head level and they can lick to calm and associate good things with the nail clipping. If your dog stops licking the licky mat or eating the treats, stop the handling and nail clipping and start again when your dog restarts licking. This builds confidence and trust and over time you can do longer sessions.

Collectively using the above tips, many dogs can learn to stay still and enjoy their own mani or pedi. If you find your dog needs additional support whether that is a vet or vet nurse showing you where to clip, behaviour modification and training, we are always here to help! If you are uncomfortable clipping your dog's nails, our dedicated nurses are available to clip your dog's nails by booking a nurse appointment.