

Canine Nail Trimming

Nail trimming is often one of the most stressful procedures for dogs. Dogs can be trained to allow this procedure to be performed without the stress, but it does take some patience. Start by handling your puppy's feet regularly while giving verbal praise and treats. It might be that you only get one finger on the top of one paw before your puppy pulls away but reward and keep trying. You can also train a dog to give you their paw by having different commands for each paw. Once you have the paw in hand and touch the nail exposing it without anxiety, you are ready to start trimming the nails. It might be that you only get one nail done a day initially. I would make sure to do this after some energy has been expended so that your puppy is not wired with excess energy. It can be helpful to have one person giving your dog peanut butter or string cheese on a tongue depressor or pretzel stick while the other person is trimming. There is a nerve and a blood vessel in the nails so that it can hurt and bleed if you cut the nail too short. We have all done this occasionally. Make sure to have quick stop on hand in case this happens although flour can usually be used.

If during any of the steps, your dog displays an aggressive response such as growling, stop whatever you are doing and simply do not provide a reward. Wait a few seconds until your dog is relaxed and return to a previously acceptable step so you can give a treat.