# Pet Nail Grooming and Hair Clipping

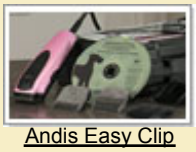
*Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff*

At-home pet grooming is on the rise, and tasks such as nail clipping and hair trimming are now commonplace for many pet owners. The satisfaction is immense, and so are the savings, compared to contracting a pet groomer for these services several times yearly.

There are good resources available to help pet owners like you become proficient at these essential grooming services. Product manuals or DVDs, articles, and web videos are just a few of those resources.

**VIDEO LINKS**

Andis Super 2-Speed Clipper



Andis Easy Clip

Self Cleaning Slickers

FURminator

## TO GET STARTED:

- Select your tools (see our recommended products below)
- Learn how to clip nails and hair
- Train your pet

## SELECT YOUR TOOLS

For nail trimming, assemble a kit so that all your supplies are in one spot. Your kit should include a quality pair of nail trimmers, a nail file designed for dogs, styptic pads, and a pair of grooming shears to clip excess hair that gets in the way of trimming. Store all these items together in a small container for easy access.

For hair coat clipping, it's good to know about the different tools. A dog grooming clipper is used for heavy-duty, all-over body cutting. A trimmer, on the other hand, is designed for close-cutting in smaller areas, like trimming around the ears and eyes, the base of the tail, and other "finish" cutting. Some products today are ideal for both all-over cutting and up-close trimming. When purchasing an at-home pet clipper, choose one that features an ergonomic shape for hand comfort, a break-resistant housing, maintenance-free care, high clipping speed, cool and quiet



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operation and one with detachable, rust-resistant blades.

## PET NAIL GROOMING

The most important thing to remember when trimming your dog's nails is to trim a series of very thin slices instead of one large cut. Stop when you see a black dot appear towards the center of the nail when you look at it head-on. This is the start of the quick, the blood vessel in the nail, also your cue to stop. If the nails splinter when you clip them, file them smooth in a sweeping motion starting from the back of the nail.

## CLIPPING HAIR

Always clip hair that is clean, since dirt, mats, and oils in the hair can quickly dull your clipper blades. Gather your clipper, and attach the blade and any combs you will be using. Some owners use a grooming table and tether; the table elevates the dog to a more natural clipping position and the tether helps keep your dog in position. When choosing a blade, you should know that the higher the blade number, the closer the cut. Always use sharp blades to avoid hair pulling. Also, snap-on combs are good for letting you leave the coat longer while still maintaining a clipper look. Many clipper manufacturers include a clipper use guide or step-by-step DVD, ideal for beginners. It is wise to begin clipping on an inconspicuous area to learn the action of the clipper. If needed, make the needed adjustments to blades and combs and proceed with confidence to give your dog a great trim.

## TRAINING YOUR PET

You want the grooming sessions to go smoothly. Therefore, it's important to spend a little time training your pet first, so he or she associates nail and hair clipping as positive activities. Before you nail clip for the first time, spend some time each day for about a week simply picking up your pet's paws and rubbing them. This gets your pet used to having the paws handled. Always praise your pet afterward and offer a small treat reward. When you begin nail clipping, keep your first couple sessions short, offering lots of praise and a treat or two, to keep things positive. With hair clipping, train your pet for the session by first introducing the clipper visually for a few days. Let your pet inspect and sniff the clipper, and then offer a small treat and praise your dog. After a few days, turn the clipper on in the presence of your pet, so your pet gets used to the sound of the clipper. Offer lots of praise and a treat reward. Gradually work up to bringing the clipper close to your pet's hair, so your pet becomes comfortable with the process. Soon, your pet will be ready for the clipping, and again, keep the first few sessions short, and always end by rewarding your pet with a treat and praise to keep the sessions positive.

### Grooming Tip

How to Trim Your Dog's Nails

Watch our "How to trim your dog's nails" video in our Video Center to learn the basics of nail trimming. We also offer printable instructions, which feature some added tips on how to get your dog used to having his paws handled, if you've never trimmed his nails before.



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## Recommended Grooming Products

Drs. Foster and Smith Nail Trimming Kit

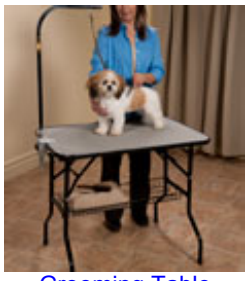
Oster Golden Home Grooming Kits

Oster Blades

Andis Blades

Andis 12 Pc Clipper Set with DVD

Nail Grinder Kit



Grooming Table

View all grooming products >



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