Many owners struggle with trimming their dog’s nails because they are nervous they are going to cut the *“quick”* of their nail or because their dog gets too stressed out and is difficult to restrain properly. Luckily, most groomers and veterinary clinics offer nail trimming services, so the owner doesn’t have to do it; however, this comes at an extra expense and some dogs are even more stressed out by getting their nails professionally done instead of by someone they already trust in their home.

Why do dogs need their nails trimmed?
Long nails can be very painful for your dog’s paws. When these long nails hit the floor or hard ground, they are pushed up into the nail bed, putting pressure on the joints in the toes and causing the toes to uncomfortably twist and bend to the side. Some dogs that are very active and that spend a lot of time outdoors on the hard ground, and the sidewalk may not require regular nail trims because the nails can naturally be worn down this way.

How often should my dog’s nails be trimmed?
This depends on the dog and how quickly their nails grow. Some dogs will need their nails cut every 1-2 weeks. Some dogs can go 3-4 weeks or longer before they are due for a trim. If you can hear your dog’s nails clicking against the hard floor when they walk, they should be trimmed.

How do I trim the nails?
As mentioned previously, the only real concern with trimming your dog’s nails is the potential to cut the nail too short and hitting the *“quick”*. The quick of the nail is the soft center that contains all of the nerves and blood supply. You can visualize the quick in white nails as the pink area at the base of the nail. The quick will usually be longer on long nails, but as the nails continue to be trimmed down regularly, the quick also begins to get shorter allowing you to take off a little bit more each time.

The best way to trim a dog’s nails is in three sections instead of clipping off one big chunk – that is how you cut too far! Take a small portion off the top left, then the top right, and then take the third portion off the middle tip. You should be trimming around the quick and not across. If after these steps the edge of the nail still looks dry and flaky, that means you can still take a little more off. Repeat these steps until the very center of the nail starts to look soft and fleshy. That is when you are too close to the quick to cut the nail any shorter.

What do I do if I cut the quick?
When the quick is cut, it tends to bleed a lot. It will also likely be a little painful for your dog, so they might cry or yelp. Don’t panic! No dog has ever died from a cut quick. It would be a good idea to have some styptic powder on hand to stop the bleeding in case you need it, but if you don’t have any, you can also use cornstarch, baking powder, flour, baby powder, etc. Just put a little bit on a tissue and press it into the tip of the bleeding nail until it stops.

