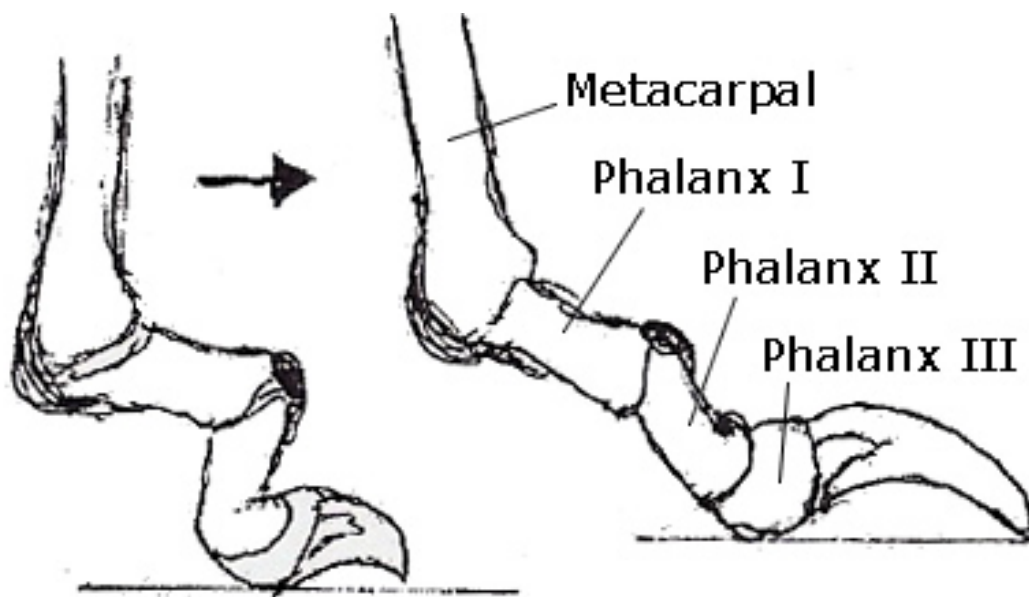


I really don't like trimming my dogs' toenails. Maybe it's because there's three of them or maybe it's because none of them fully cooperate for the length of time it takes to do all four feet. Whatever it is I will fully admit I don't like it and I don't trim their nails as often as I should...until now. I did a little research.

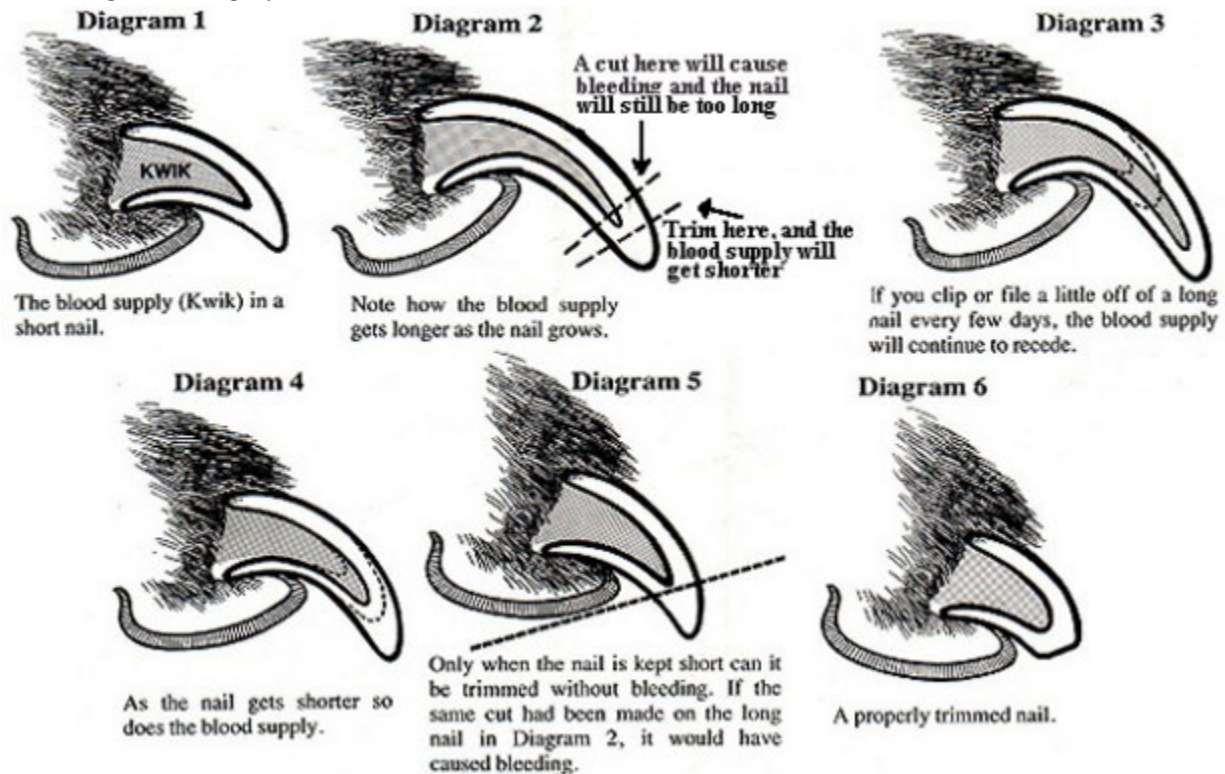
The most common foot problem in dogs is toenails that are too long. A dog's toenails should not touch the floor when standing, but should be long enough to grip the ground when running and climbing.

Dogs are meant to stand on their toes like in the picture below on the left. When their toenails are too long they actually have to "rock back" and are forced to hold their toes like they are climbing; like in the picture below on the right. They are overcompensating and this causes excess pressure on the joints in their rear. I know everyone is aware of all the problems that can be caused with the hips being overtaxed.



There are before and after pictures I saw in my research of how a simple toenail trim can completely change how a dog is standing.

Here's a great info graph



I prefer to use a Dremel tool when trimming my dogs' nails. 2 out of 3 of them have black toenails and I cannot see the quick. It's much easier to avoid hitting the quick using a Dremel tool. Unfortunately, all of them fear the sound so for now we're just using clippers. I clip once every 2 weeks usually since I cannot get as close to the quick as I can with the Dremel tool.

When I had 3 dogs that didn't mind the Dremel tool I used this "let's get these toenails under control" schedule. I would Dremel their toenails back to where I can see the quick. It takes approximately a week for the nail to grow back over the quick and for the quick to recede (isn't that cool?!). I then continued to Dremel toenails once per week until they are the correct length then I Dremeled them once every 2-3 weeks, depending on how active we are in that time frame.

Why don't wolves need their toenails trimmed? They walk an average of 30 miles per day so they naturally wear their nails down.

You can search online lots of ways to "train" your dog to let you trim their toenails. One woman I used to know worked for 6 months before she could get close to her dog with any tools, but they eventually got there and it's much easier now.

We used lots of treats while dremeling nails. Neenah was usually first in line and preferred to come back several times for "touch ups" just to get a treat. Frosty wanted 10 treats for every toe and would not come back after her turn was over. Zayla refused the treats completely and I have to have someone help me hold her. Penny (and I remind you we had her for over 15 years) was happy to take the treat and would still bite us therefore she had to wear a muzzle while getting her toes done. That's probably why she had the longest toenails.