

## THE IMPORTANCE OF NAIL CLIPPING

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Why is it important to periodically trim my rabbit's nails?

There are several reasons to do so:

- 1) To prevent nail breakage, as this can lead to infection due to bleeding from the toe if the break is too deep.
- 2) Broken or missing nails can mean disqualification in a rabbit competition (see page 25 of the ARBA Standard of Perfection book).
- 3) Sharp or untrimmed nails can cause harm to the rabbit or to other rabbits. A scratch is often the cause of abscesses, which can lead to death of the affected rabbit.

What could be used to properly cut my bunny's nails?

- 1) Ordinary human nail clippers can be used for smaller breeds.
- 2) Dog clippers can be used for large breeds.
- 3) Specific small animal nail clippers that can be purchased through a pet store or an equipment company. We use Klubertanz (<http://www.klubertanz.com>) and Da-Mar's ([www.damars.8m.com](http://www.damars.8m.com)) companies, as their prices are competitive. The best clippers have a safety bar feature to prevent over cutting the nail.

How often should I cut my rabbit's nails?

As soon as they look sharp, jagged, or can penetrate your clothing. If you see the nail twisting out of its normal position, it is definitely time to trim it. It also depends on how much wear and tear the individual rabbit puts on his nails.

To cut the nails:

You may wish to examine the rabbit nail before clipping. Leading into the foot is a blood vessel, which will bleed if the nail is cut too short. A steady hand is needed to clip these nails successfully. You may wish to have some gauze on hand and some

hydrogen peroxide in case of an accident, which is easy to do. If this happens, you also may wish to apply some antibiotic cream if there is any sign of infection.

The key thing is to keep the rabbit calm. Some breeders will balance the rabbit on their leg and hold the animal against his/her body to clip the hind feet; others will use a grooming table. My husband simply holds the rabbit against him, while clipping; he does it quickly and with precision. I have done this with the help of my daughter, who steadies the bunny and the paw I need to trim. You will want to trim each nail away from the paw, depending where you see the blood vessel. Use extra caution for breeds that have dark nails, as it is very difficult to see where the cavity containing the blood vessel is.

Hopefully the above tips will assist you in the proper grooming of your pet or show animal.