



There's no doubt about it—sometimes, puppies need a bath.

Bathing helps clean up messes (say, if your curious puppy steps in mud) and maintain healthy skin and hair coat. It's also a good habit when your pup is all grown up.

Nail trims are important, too, to prevent nail overgrowth and breakage—not to mention, avoiding sharp toenails while cuddling.

Right now is the perfect time to develop healthy new habits—try these simple tips for puppy baths and nail trims...

Puppy Baths and Nail Trims: A How-To Guide

A puppy's curious mind leads them to explore everything—whether that means rolling in mud or spilling something in the kitchen.

So, maybe you're wondering when and how to bathe your new furry puppy—and whether you can trim those pointy puppy toenails at home.

Here are a few benefits of bathing and nail trims...

- Baths keep your puppy clean after potty-training mishaps or other messes.
- Bathing helps maintain healthy skin, coat, and paws, and can help treat any allergies or skin infections that may develop later in life.
- Regular baths may help with shedding and odors.
- Toenail trims help keep their nails healthy and not so sharp.

So, how do you get started?

Here's your Puppy Bathing and Nail Trim 101 guide...

When And How Often Do Puppies Need Baths?

Most puppies are adopted between 8-12 weeks of age. This is old enough for a bath, if they need one—and because of potty training, many puppies DO need baths.

Daily baths aren't necessary and can cause dry skin and coat.

A better frequency is once per week to once a month.

If your puppy gets dirty between baths, it's okay to give an extra bath or rinse to keep them clean.

Alternatively, you can just wash the part of them that's dirty (for example, if they stepped in mud, just wash their paws).



Step-By-Step Tips For Puppy Bathing

- **Before the first bath...**

- Start slow. Put your puppy in a dry tub or sink and offer them treats and lots of praise. Help them develop a positive association with bath time.
- Choose the right shampoo. A gentle product designed for puppies is best—human products are too drying.
- Use a non-slip surface. Bathmats or tub stickers work well.

- **Gather all supplies at the beginning.** Never leave your puppy unattended in the bath.

- **Make sure the water isn't too hot or too cold.** Test it on your wrist, like you would for a human baby. Puppies can't regulate their body temperature as well as adults, so they get cold quickly—but overly hot water also isn't good.

- **Use a detachable sprayer.** Or if you must fill a tub or sink, be sure the water isn't above puppy's head.

- Once the water is at the right temperature, **wet your puppy's fur and apply the shampoo**, gently working it into a lather.

- **Avoid the eyes and ears.** Water in the ears can lead to an ear infection, and shampoo in the eyes can burn. Instead, use a wet cloth to wipe their adorable face clean.

- **Offer praise, be kind and gentle.** Talk in a calm, soothing voice, and offer treats periodically. Make it a positive experience.

- **Rinse your puppy.** Be sure to wash off all the shampoo.

- **Gently towel dry.** Keep your buddy indoors, away from drafts until totally dry.

- **If using a hair dryer**, only use the lowest setting and hold it a foot away or further from your puppy's body to avoid burns. Some pup's might not like the noise, so start slow and offer praise and treats.

What If My Puppy Doesn't Like Baths?

Some pups love water, while others just never take to it.

If your puppy falls into the latter category, don't worry—it's normal for many dogs.

Even if bath time is never a fun experience, you can still make it tolerable with praise, a gentle tone of voice, affection and petting, and treats.

That way, they'll still feel supported and loved throughout the whole experience.

Tips For Toenail Trims

Now that the first bath is done... what about your puppy's toenails?

Nails can be sharp during puppyhood. And, by getting your puppy used to toenail trims now, their nails are less likely to overgrow or break in the future.

Try these tips...

- **Start slow.** Several days before the first toenail trim, start gently touching your puppy's feet while offering praise. This will get them used to having their paws handled.

- **Choose a pair of dog nail trimmers you feel comfortable with** and that are a good size match for your puppy's nails.

- **Learn a dog's toenail anatomy.** Inside the nail are blood vessels and nerves—they're easy to see with clear toenails (a pink line when looking at the nail from the side), and harder to see with dark toenails (instead, look for where the nail tip narrows and curves down).

- Only trim the tip of the nail past this point—cutting too short can lead to pain and bleeding.

- Start small—you can always trim more later, but if you cut too short your puppy won't appreciate it and might resist future nail trims.

- If you're not sure, ask your veterinarian for a demonstration at your next puppy visit.

- **Try it when your puppy is sleepy** to make the nail trim easier for both of you.

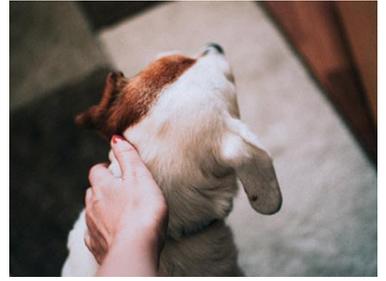
- **Hold each toe gently and securely, and trim the nail tip.** Be sure you can clearly see the toenail, and that your pup won't suddenly wiggle when you use the toenail clippers.



Don't worry if it's not possible... you're definitely not alone!

If you can trim your puppy's nails at home, that's great! If not, you can bring your pup to your veterinarian's office or a groomer from time to time to get the job done (the same goes with baths, if you prefer).

Whatever you choose, just be sure to offer calm words, treats, and plenty of praise—that way, bathing and nail trims will be more of a pleasant experience for both of you, and easier to continue as your buddy grows up.



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