

Pet paw care

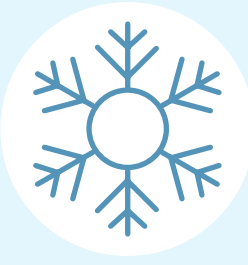
Here are Petplan's top tips for making sure your dog's feet stay in top condition all year around...



Getting started: paw pampering

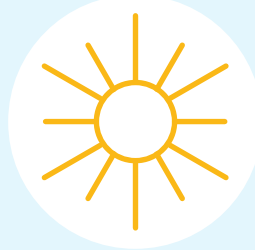
Looking after your dog's paws can require a lot of patience – especially if they are not used to having their paws touched. Give your dog a paw massage every now and again which will help your dog get used to you touching their paws. Start by gently rubbing the pads and then move to between their toes to relax them and get them comfortable with the experience.

WINTERTIME CARE



The cold weather presents a whole host of issues for dog owners when it comes to caring for your pet's paws. The salt and de-icers used on roads and pavements can irritate your dog's paws, so you should ensure you wash and moisturise their paws after they've been outside.

SUMMERTIME CARE



Dogs' paws are similar to human feet in that they are very sensitive to the surface they're walking over. If it would hurt the soles of your feet to walk across the hot tarmac of a car park in summer, it can also be uncomfortable for your dog – and may lead to blistering on their soles.

If this happens, you should wash their paws gently in an antibacterial wash or warm salty water and wrap in gauze in a figure eight pattern, with loops around the foot and ankle. Wrap firmly, but not tight. Tape the end of the gauze to secure it. This will prevent infection and protect the sores.

TRIMMING

If you can hear your dog's toenails clicking on the floor, then it's probably time for a trim. Not all dogs enjoy having their feet touched, but getting your dog accustomed to this from an early age can help when it comes to trimming your dog's nails.

CRACKED PADS AND CUTS



If you notice the soles of your dog's paws are cracked or dry, then massage Vaseline into them. Alternatively there are special pad moisturisers which you can buy from pet shops that are specifically designed for the job.

Small cuts can be treated by gently washing your dog's feet with an antibacterial wash or warm salty water and applying a small bandage as per the advice for blisters above. However; if the cut is deep or will not stop bleeding, consult your vet as it may need stitches or antibiotics.

HOW TO TRIM YOUR DOG'S NAILS

1

Use special dog nail clippers which can be bought from most pet shops and start with just a few claws, trimming a small bit off the end of each toenail and, as they get used to it, progressing to the whole paw.

2

If the claw starts to feel spongy while you are trying to cut it – stop as you may be cutting the quick. The quick is the dark part inside the nail – the blood supply to avoid – and can be painful for your dog if cut. It can be seen easily in light coloured claws and is pink in colour. However; in dark or black claws it's difficult to see and hence more difficult to gauge where to cut. It's a good idea to have a styptic pencil or potassium permanganate ready to stem the bleeding in case you do accidentally snip the quick.

3

Don't forget the dew claws! These are particularly prone to growing too long as your dog doesn't ground these down from walking everyday.

4

Start to associate trimming with positive things, such as a tasty treat, and eventually your dog may even learn to look forward to it.

However, if your dog is uncooperative then visit your vet who can do this for you.

