

Paw Care Checklist

Four paws, sixteen toes, and a lot of ground covered. This is the routine we run with ours – print it, stick it somewhere near the door, and tick it off as you go.

Wipe the paws

after every walk

- ☐ **Damp cloth or pet wipe** – warm water is enough; skip anything scented.
- ☐ **Get between the toes** – grit collects there and stays there.
- ☐ **Dry properly** – damp fur between the pads is where irritation starts.
- ☐ **Check what came off** – salt, tar and foxtails are worth catching early.

Trim the nails

every 2–4 weeks

- ☐ **Use real dog clippers** – scissors crush the nail rather than cut it.
- ☐ **Take a little at a time** – several small cuts beat one confident one.
- ☐ **Stop before the quick** – the pink core on pale nails. On black nails, stop when the cut end turns chalky gray.
- ☐ **Don't forget the dewclaws** – higher up the leg, and the ones that curl into the skin.
- ☐ **Listen on hard floors** – if you can hear clicking, they're due.

Look them over

once a week

- ☐ **Pads** – cracks, dryness, cuts, anything embedded.
- ☐ **Between the toes** – redness, swelling, matted fur, grass seeds.
- ☐ **Nails** – splits, snags, one growing into the pad.
- ☐ **Their behavior** – licking one paw more than the others is usually the first sign.

Quick Tips

Make it easy on yourself

- Keep a towel and wipes **by the door you actually use**. A routine that needs a trip to the bathroom cupboard stops happening by week two.
- Trim after a walk or a bath, when nails are softer and the dog is tired.
- Do one paw a night if a full session is a fight. Nobody said it had to be in one sitting.

Weather worth watching

- **Hot pavement:** hold the back of your hand on it for seven seconds. If you can't, neither can they.
- **Salted roads and ice melt:** rinse, don't just wipe – it burns and it gets licked off.
- **Dry winter air:** a dog-safe paw balm on cracked pads, not a human moisturizer.

Call your vet if you see

- Limping that lasts more than a day
- Swelling, heat, or a bad smell
- A nail torn into the quick
- Bleeding that won't stop with pressure
- Constant licking or chewing at one paw
- Anything lodged you can't easily remove

Four-week tracker

Tick the wipe-downs as you go; one trim and one once-over a week is plenty for most dogs.

	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	TRIM	LOOK OVER
Week 1									
Week 2									
Week 3									
Week 4									

Notes

The thing you mean to mention at the next vet visit.

We're dog owners, not veterinarians. This is the routine we use at home and it's meant as a general guide – anything that looks wrong, hurts, or doesn't improve is a conversation for your vet. In the US, ASPCA Animal Poison Control is (888) 426-4435, 24/7; a fee may apply.

Healthy paws = happy dogs