



Until You Find Me

Home Grooming The Companion Old English Sheepdog

Trimming An Old English Sheepdog's Foot Pads & Feet

<http://www.untilyoufindme.com/Pads.htm>



Below is just one way an Old English Sheepdog owner tends to a dog's feet. The vibration of electric clippers can startle or tickle so dogs need to be slowly desensitized to the process. Because some dogs are more sensitive to having their feet handled, grooming can be more challenging for some owners. You need to proceed slowly, respect the dog's limits, praise and reward lavishly so the dog will learn to tolerate it. Only you know your dog and how he or she may respond. Seek assistance from a professional if there is any chance your dog could be harmed by it's exuberance or fear or if the dog could display an aggressive behavior. Follow all product safety instructions provided by individual manufacturers. Try to make grooming a special one-on-one time that both you and your dog will look forward to. These instructions are offered as-is and without guarantee or warranty.

The Home Groomed Old English Sheepdog

What you're trying to accomplish...

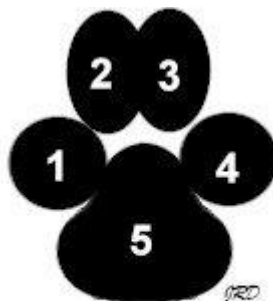


Trimming hair between the Old English Sheepdog's pads improves traction, prevents painful matting and also allows for better air flow. There will be less hair to carry in sand/dirt from the backyard too. Dogs sweat through their foot pads so removing this hair helps their feet dry faster too. Hairy feet can hold dirt, moisture, bacteria, yeast, etc.

Before trimming an OES's feet for the first time, get to know how the dog's feet were created. Each foot has a large pad in the back and 4 smaller toe pads to the front. Front legs also have a pad on the back of the leg where it bends at the "wrist". OESs that have not had dewclaws removed in the first few days after birth will also a small toe with a pad, webbing and toenail on the inside of the front legs... you may occasionally find back dewclaws also.



Webbing between the toes.



Pads on the bottom of a dog's foot.



= Webbing between toes

Tools I Use To Trim A Dog's Pad/Foot Hair



You don't need fancy or expensive tools for this job. I use a small, inexpensive battery operated palm clipper by Conairpet™ to shave the hair from between my Old English Sheepdogs pads ([it's now yellow & black](#)). It's small so it's easy to get between the pads. I found that rechargeable batteries provide more power for a longer duration. I like the shorter version of [The Untangler®](#) for the feet but you can use any good comb. I also used small scissors with stainless steel blades found at the grocery store... any scissors that cut hair well are fine. Once you get more comfortable scissoring, you'll enjoy better quality scissors.



Palm Clipper Tips

- Glide the clipper blade over the skin, don't apply much pressure or you could cause razor burn.
- Keep the blade level with the skin as you shave so you don't cut skin. Use extra care when there are narrow or raised areas of skin like the top of the webbing.
- The little battery operated palm clipper I used in this demo doesn't heat up like a standard size clipper. If using a larger clipper and say a #15 blade, frequently touch the blade with YOUR fingers to be certain the blade isn't heating up... hot clipper blades will cause your dog pain and possibly a burn. I no longer use a spray blade coolant... it seemed to clog up and bog down my blades. I remove a blade that's gotten too warm, place it on a cool surface and replace it with another blade. I've also used a cold pack, the kind you keep in the freezer for a sprain, and will place a too warm blade between it for faster cooling. You need to be careful of condensation though... keep the blade dry and oil it after use.

The following technique is based on a dog that is already very comfortable with having both her feet handled and the vibration of electric clippers...

When using electric clippers or scissors to trim our dog's feet, I'm very careful that I don't accidentally nick or cut the dog. Especially important in the foot area is the webbing between each toe... this webbing is a ridge of skin that separates the area between the toes from the area around the larger pad. I like to clip the hair short but I don't apply much pressure doing so... I don't want to cause razor burn. Some dogs may be more sensitive to shaving... if this is the case, you may wish to use a clipper blade that will leave the hair a little longer. My 5 OESs and Border Collie-mix all have their feet tended to in this manner.



VERY fuzzy foot pads... a trim is long over due.



I first shave the area behind the large pad.



I gently lift the toe for better access between the toe pads and the larger pad.



I begin shaving the area between the large pad and the small toe pads being careful of the webbing between the toes.



I shave from the toe toward the larger pad first...



Then from the large pad toward the toe pads.



I go back and touch up any missed spots.



The next step is to trim the area between the toes... this is where you need to be even more careful of the webbing between the toes so you don't accidentally cut it.



Note the edge of the webbing between the toe.



I shave about 1/8" up the side of the toe pads and webbing. Keep an eye out for any matting between the toes. I either gently comb/pick it apart or shave to remove. Repeat between other toes.



I also shave about 1/8" up the outside of toes 1 and 4.



Between the pads and around each toe have now been trimmed. Using scissors, even up the outside a little. I take the hair, bend it toward the pads and trim the hair even... see another example below.



I bend the hair on the outside of the feet toward me then even it up with scissors. I go all the way around the outside of the feet.



Now repeat this process on the other feet.



When all the feet have been completed, I stand the dog up and comb out the feet.



Using my fingers, I gently lift the hair between the toes and comb again so there won't be any longer sprigs of hair later on. I round up the foot hair with scissors.

Finally, I scissor around the outside of the feet as the dog stands being careful not to cut the pads. See below for an example of a dog with longer hair. Inspect the finished feet for any accidental nicks because it can happen. I wash the feet and apply a little antibacterial salve if one is found... then check the next day to be sure it's healing.

Rounding Up The Foot Hair



Back Feet- Make sure the dog is standing straight with his/her toes pointing forward. My first cut is straight across the front being sure to leave the hair a little longer than the ends of the toenails so they stay hidden. Trimming nails after a haircut will also help ensure the nails remain hidden. Then trim in a curve from the front to around the sides. After I've trimmed the back of the legs to length, I round up the back of the foot too.

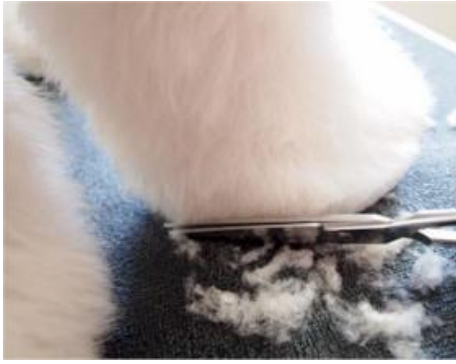


FRONT FEET: Trim the front feet the same way as the back feet... make sure the toes are pointing straight forward.

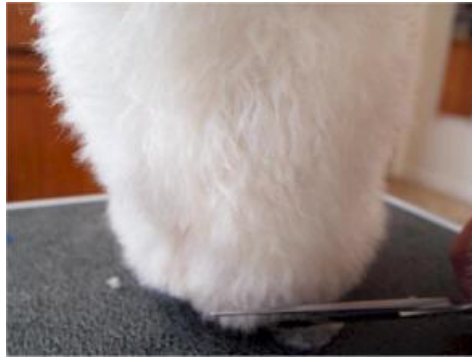


Cut the hair straight across the front being sure to leave the hair long enough so the nails stay hidden.





Then round to both sides from the front.



And cross the back to meet the previous cuts.



I then trim the other foot.

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3946 Park Lane - Traverse City, Michigan 49686

Old English Sheepdog & Shaggy Dog Rescue Assistance.