

## GROOMING YOUR GOLDEN ~

### THE FEET

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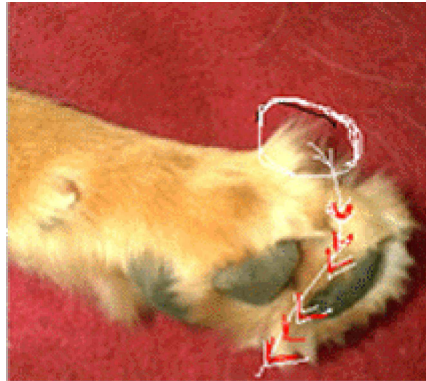
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**The easiest way to accomplish trouble free grooming of your dog, is with the use of a grooming table with a grooming arm and noose, simply because you have control of the dog, and dogs are less likely to move when on the table. The instructions if followed, will give you a "ring ready" grooming job on the feet! Note: for the purposes of this tutorial on Feet, I am assuming that the dogs Nails have already been trimmed properly. I will follow the foot trimming, with proper nail trimming, but if you are a beginner, you should pan down and learn how to trim the nails first! The front and rear feet are trimmed the same with the exception of the trimming of the hock and pastern.**

**Here is a photo of a fuzzy, untrimmed front foot. The photo is a our current foster/rescue dog, about 3 weeks after having been trimmed.**



The fuzz growing from between toes, circled this photo, should be pushed down through the dogs toes with your finger. Fig 1a



Untrimmed

Front Foot

Trimmed

**The foot should be held backwards. (whether using a grooming table, or grooming on the floor), and the straight edge sheers are then laid flat (parallel) to the pads of the dogs foot and all of the unruly hair trimmed even with the bottom of the pads, including**

**the fuzz you just pushed through from the top of the foot (Fig 1a)**

**Do NOT trim the hair from between the pads either from the top, or the bottom of the foot! If you make that mistake, you will have a splayed and flattened foot;**

**ugly to look at, and not in keeping with the Breed Standard, that says**

**"tight and cat-like", and certainly not ready for the show ring!**



**Next, use the straight shears around the outside perimeter of each pad, working for the most part, with the foot held backwards and working from underneath. This is an additional view to the left, just to show how you are skirting the edge of the pads on the outside of the foot.**

**Now... back to the fuzz on top of the foot.**

**I had you push it down through the toes and then trim it flat and even with the pads on the bottom of the foot.**

**NOW I want you to pull it back to the top of the foot with your fingers so it is straight out as in the photo to the left. Then with the thinning shears make one thinning cut, making sure you are making your thinning cut only in the fuzz. Then **STOP**. Brush the hair down with a bristle brush, or push down with your fingers. Look at your progress with the dog standing on the grooming**



table.

You may also pluck a small amount of this fuzzy hair out with your fingers, but remember don't remove a lot of it! Not done yet, but we will come back for finishing!



In this photo, I am showing the angle of the straight shears held perpendicular to (and actually laying on) the large pad on the front foot.

I am holding the toes with my thumb and forefingers, to enable laying the shears on the large pad. The pasterns are usually only trimmed up from the pad about 3/4" to 1" max for show purposes,

so as not to give the dog a weakened look to his pastern. You do not do this trimming closely, either with scissors or with an electric clipper, this is why you are trimming even with the level of the large pad.

In my opinion an electric clipper has no place in the Golden Retrievers grooming tool box.



Here again, **with straight shears**: showing the trimming of the front pastern. I prefer using the 3/4"

trim only, and of course you are trimming across the width of the foot while doing this.

This photo is showing the perpendicular final trim on the fuzz over the toenails of both the front & back feet.



You may use either the straight blade shear, or the thinning shears for this, but I suggest the thinning shears until you are well practiced. Do not lay the shears in toward the foot when doing this, keep them coming straight up from the table. This must be done with the dog standing. The thinning shears may be used with rapid-consecutive

cuts (held perpendicular to table) as shown above, around the general shape of the toes (outside edge of front & rear feet).

This is the final trim around the feet, front & back, with the dog



standing on the table.

The tip and bottom blade of your straight shears should be resting on the table. When trimming around the nails, depending on the type of foot the dog has, I may decide to trim more away from the toenails, to shorten the appearance of the toes, but in most cases, you do not want to expose the toenails, and should not need to, especially on the back feet. Just slide the shear along the nail to trim as shown.

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If at this final look at the foot, you are still not satisfied because you still have "fuzz" on top of the toes, pull the fuzzy hairs out away from the foot once again, and at the outside edge of the fuzz, angle your thinning shears so they will make the cut closer (or shorter) near the toenail, and longer near the top of the

toe as shown in this photo. Thin one stroke or cut at a time, brush the foot and look, with the dog standing on it; this should take no more than 1 very light thinning cut, possibly two.

A photo of the "finished foot" both front (left) and rear (right) is shown here:



Trimming the hock is simple. Brush the hair out from the foot and hock. Using your straight edge shears, make a vertical cut, perpendicular to the table the total length of the hock, leaving the hair length at least 3/4" to 1" long at the back of the hock as an end result. If the dog has an excess of hair, you may thin it a little with thinning shears. The dotted blue lines in the photo give you an idea of where to trim, then brush down, and neaten up at the back of the pad. You are neatening up the "line", but you do not want to trim too short...note the actual hock is a good distance away from my dotted line!



Nail trimming, is easily done with a good quality Large Dog nail clipper, which I prefer over the guillotine type clippers. Have some Quick Stop powder or other styptic powder for stopping bleeding if you do accidentally cut too short. If you don't have that, some cornstarch or baking soda will also work, just pack it into the nail, and keep the dog quiet and out of water for a few

minutes. With the this photo as a guide, you are unlikely to have an accident happen, if you trim a little at a time, and don't have a dog that is jerking and trying to pull away. Do NOT yell at your dogs or whack on them during your grooming sessions! Keep the sessions short, talk calmly and authoritatively to them, insisting that they hold and "S T A Y- Y" while you work on them, the give them lots of praise!

On some very overgrown nails, you might also double check the length of the quick by looking under the nails. If the nails are extremely over-grown, you may have to trim a little at a time and often to get them shortened. A nail grinder is also wonderful tool, and often I find that dogs that are frightened, and fight having their nails trimmed with a regular hand trimmer, are perfectly fine with the electric grinder!

The red arrows on the photo show where you should make your final trim. Note: if you are using grinders, do not grind for more than a couple of seconds at a time on one nail, as the heat from grinder friction on the nail can also be painful. Do a little at a time on all nails and take special care not to catch the grinder in feathering or other hair!

Do not forget to trim the Dew Claw, which sits higher on the inside of the front leg. If this is not trimmed, it can literally turn and grow back into the dogs foot and cause real problems.



This is a light colored toenail, that you can see the "quick" easily, Note the nail begins to curve downward just past the pink "quick"...so the rule is, even with a black nail, trim it just to where it begins its downward curve. In most cases, you will not cut the quick if following this rule.

The next Grooming Tutorial will cover trimming Shoulders and Tails. Navigation below

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