



# Trimming Your Goat's Hooves

*Goats need to have strong feet and legs to survive. Wild goats keep their hooves in good shape by wearing the hooves down on rough rocks; however, domestic goats, even if they have hard surfaces and play areas rely on you, their owner, to keep their hooves in good condition. Ideally a domestic goat will get its hooves trimmed every three to four months, more often in show goats, but at least two times a year.*

Overgrown hooves not only cause your goat pain, but can also cause foot problems such as footrot and footscald if goats are kept in damp environments, laminitis, joint and tendon problems and arthritis.

Hoof trimming takes a quite a bit of practice to master and good tools help. To trim a goat's hooves, you will need a pair of hoof shears (pruning shears will also work) and a rasp to make a smooth finish on the hooves. Use extreme caution when working with sharp tools.

Dry conditions can make hooves more difficult to trim. To soften hard or dry, brittle hooves, let your goats stand in a wet area for a few hours before you trim. The water will soften the hooves and make it easier to trim.

When kids are born they have perfect feet. The line between the two halves of the hoof is perpendicular to the hairline. When trimming the two halves, do so evenly so that both sides of the hoof meet the ground equally. The sole of hoof should be flat and level on the bottom. There are many drawings and photographs available online on what your goat's hooves should look like if you need help.

Listed below are some general steps for trimming your goat's hooves:

1. Restrain the goat in a standing position and lift the first hoof to be trimmed. Always fold the leg with the natural movement of the joints of the leg. Angling the leg outward too much will cause discomfort to the goat and make trimming a problematic activity.
2. Using the hoof shears slowly remove pieces of the overgrown hoof. If you're just starting out take only very small amounts off at a time. If you see pink on the hoof STOP, if you cut any farther the animal will bleed.
3. Cut off all of the hoof that has grown down from the sides and folded over. If a good job has been done, the hoof will be flat and level.
4. Use a hoof rasp to make a smooth finish on the hooves.
5. If the hoof has a lot of rotten tissue, dip it in hydrogen peroxide or bleach after you finish trimming.
6. If your goat does bleed, wash the hoof off and soak the hoof in hydrogen peroxide or any other disinfecting solution.

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