

# Northern Japanese Spitz Club

## *Feet Trimming*



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## Japanese Spitz - Guide to Feet Trimming



### Trimming Feet

The only part of the Japanese Spitz which should be trimmed are the feet. They have “cat like” feet and it’s easy to see when it’s time to get the scissors out, they start to get that “grinch” like look with the fur hanging over the edge of the foot and looking generally untidy. Paw trimming takes practice but it’s easy when you know how and you’ve got the right equipment.



Someone is ready for a trim →

Some dogs don’t like their feet being handled so it’s important to get them use to you handling their paws from a very young age. So, at every opportunity, handle both front and rear paws, they’re quick to learn and will soon get used to it especially if there are treats on offer after for “good behaviour”.

Claw trimming is also an essential part of their grooming routine too for a number of reasons:-

- 🐾 Long claws can be uncomfortable for the dog.
- 🐾 It’s also a myth that walking on hard surfaces “grind down” the claws, it doesn’t.
- 🐾 Long claws and make the toes splay and the heel drop (Japanese Spitz walk on their toes)

### Equipment:

You don’t need expensive scissors to trim the feet; they can be purchased easily of Amazon and if you’re not sure what you need; ask one of the Breed Experts on the Northern Japanese Spitz Facebook Group; they’ll be happy to advise.

You can manage all foot trimming with one pair of scissors; however, 3 pairs are really useful as follows:-



**Curved** – to easily trim around the paw and the pad area

**Straight** – to trim the hocks



**Thinning** – to thin out the top of the foot (if needed)



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### Let's get started ...

First step is trimming the pads, this is to remove the fur that grows between the pads, underneath the foot. It's really important that you keep the fur in this area well-trimmed for a couple of reasons:-

- 🐾 Untrimmed pads can make walking on slippery surfaces risky for dogs, they can slip and hurt themselves (especially puppies)
- 🐾 It can also be uncomfortable for them (imagine you walking around for days with a ruck under your socks)

### Trimming the pads:

Using the curved scissors and taking care not to touch the pads, trim the excess fur that's sticking through the pads, you may find it easier to gently spread the paw so you have better access to the fur, take your time, you can always revisit this again if the dog is getting fidgety.



The image to the left shows the fur poking through the pad, you can also see that the pad is obscured with the fur which can make walking on some surfaces quite slippery for the dog (especially puppies).



You can use the tip of the scissors to free the fur to make it easier to cut but always being careful not to touch the pad(s).

The image to the right shows a neatly trimmed pad area, you can see the pads clearly and you also have a clear view of the claws too, trimming the pad fur also gives you a good view of the fur that needs trimming around the paw.

**Much Improved, pads visible**



If you do not have curved scissors available you can, of course, use straight scissors - however do ensure that you buy scissors that have 'squared-off' ends so that you cannot accidentally stab your pet with any pointed ends.



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### Paw Trimming:

The next step is to trim the paws, this is to create that “cat like” foot and it’s really easy to do.



Get your scissors to hand, if you’ve opted for 3 pairs, use the curved scissors, you’ll have more control and it’ll be easier to follow the curve of the foot. Straight scissors are fine, you’ll just find it a little more difficult to get a smooth curve, especially whilst you’re learning.

Both you and your dog need to be relaxed; take each paw in turn and firstly trim around the outside of the paw, always have in your mind that you’re aiming for a “cat like” foot. Always bear in mind you can always revisit this if your dog gets too fidgety.



The image on the left above is a paw that’s ready for trimming. You can see the fur is untidy and hangs over the foot, this is starting to get the “grinch” effect.

Some breeds, such as Samoyeds, have what are known as “snowshoe feet” which is where the fur is left to grow between the toes and helps prevent them from sinking into the snow, Japanese Spitz don’t have “snowshoe feet”, we have cat like feet and the fur is kept neat and tidy both underneath and on top of the foot.

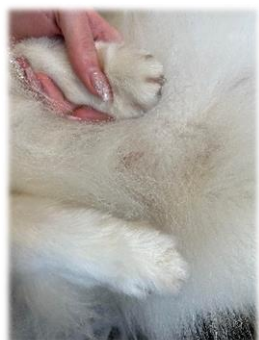
Before you start to trim, brush the fur forward on the foot so you can see exactly what you need to be trimming, it’s usually fairly easy to see

Taking the curved scissors (straight scissors are fine), carefully trim the excess fur, following the curve of the foot.

Be warned, some Japanese Spitz have ticklish feet so they may pull away.



The finished result should look something like this do bear in mind it takes practice and also that feet trimming is a great opportunity for bonding with your dog.



Some dogs love having their paws trimmed as you can see here



The paw is being held firmly giving a good view of the fur that needs to be trimmed. This dog is rather relaxed and, on his back, some dogs prefer to be stood, that’s fine, again, just take the paw firmly (but not harshly) and trim.

Once the pads and paws are trimmed, you may want to thin the fur on the top of the foot, this gives a more streamlined appearance. All you need to do is to take the thinning scissors and gently snip the bulky fur that’s formed on the top of the foot.

**Note:** Only thinning scissors should be used on the top of the foot.



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### Trimming the Hocks:



Next step is trimming the hocks. This is the area, when looking at the rear of the dog, between the foot and the ankle. When the hocks need trimming, they often look like the dog is sporting a rather nifty pair of stirrups when looking at them from the back so if the hocks need trimming, you'll know.

← the hock

The hocks should be only be trimmed enough to give a neat appearance, you need to use straight scissors to carefully create a straight edge.

Using a comb, lift the fur before cutting so you can see exactly what needs to be trimmed. The image to the right shows the fur ready for trimming. Taking your time, trim in a straight line.



The end result should be when the dog is stood, there doesn't appear to be any excess fur on the hock and it looks neat and tidy.

### Claw Trimming:

Many people believe that dogs walking on hard surfaces grind down the claws, although this may have some effect, it is nowhere near enough to prevent you from needing to keep the claws trimmed.

Claw trimming is really important for the following reasons:-

- 🐾 Long claws are uncomfortable for the dog
- 🐾 Long claws can make the toes "splay" and make them flat footed; not only does this affect the way the dog moves, it's also unsightly.

Some people use conventional claw trimmers to trim the claws, but many prefer using a "Dremel" type drill which grinds the claw, this can be beneficial for those dogs who are sensitive to traditional claw trimming because it is seen to be less disturbing for them (so by default, it's better for you too).



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If cutting the claws using conventional claw trimmers, it's imperative you know where the "quick" is in the claw. The quick is the outer end of a blood vessel in the claw itself and if cut into can bleed profusely.

As most of our breed have black claws, it can be difficult to see the quick. So if you're using a conventional claw trimmer; to start with just trim the ends of the claws off. With regular trimming the quick will start to recede.



Should you accidentally nick the quick, it will bleed, a lot. It's nothing to worry about and a little bit of styptic powder (the stuff your dad used to use when he nicked himself shaving) which can be bought from any pet store or chemist, will do the trick.

Using a Dremel type drill is much safer, hold the paw and gently drill each claw taking the end off.

The image to the left above shows claws that are ready for trimming – you can see the claw poking through the fur.



The image to the right shows claws which have been drilled using a Dremel type drill.

Whichever method you use, . . . . .

**Well done - pedicure complete!**