

WHY IS HOOF CARE IMPORTANT?

Introduction By Patty Hill:

Always have your pig in a confined area with crowding boards handy, straddle the pig and grab behind the front legs like giving him a hug, lean back and a person will put a chair behind you so you can sit, at the same time there will be a stool being put under the pig's butt, lean back in the chair so the pig is leaning back with you; this makes it easier on your back! When the hoof trim is finished, lean to one side just a bit and put the pig down easy. Have 4 people to help: a holder, the person that's doing the hooves, a person to hold the nose, and a person to put the chair under the holder and the stool under the pig's butt, make sure the pig's tail isn't bent on the stool. Never pull or grab legs!

By Nancy Shepherd:

HOW DO I TRIM MY PIG'S HOOVES?

It's always better to do maintenance procedures on your pig at home where the environment is familiar and your pig feels safe rather than to have the vet, who your pig perceives as a stranger, work on her. If your piggy is touchable all over, you should have no trouble keeping her hooves in good shape. You may need to take the time to acquaint your pig with the trimming tool you will be using so she is not afraid of it. This can be accomplished simply by letting her see it in her environment and nose around on it (making sure she doesn't hurt herself, of course). This toe job will be much easier if you enlist a helper. One person rubs and loves up piggy while the other provides a careful pedicure. I last trimmed the hooves of my favorite sow, Aggie, while she was a-farrowing. Aggie was so centered on her motherly duties that she paid no attention to me.

Be sure not to cut too much of the hoof or bleeding will result, then you will have a tenderfoot to contend with. If you examine the toe and pad structure of the hoof, you will see where and where not to trim. This is especially easy to note on pigs with white hooves. Make sure to snip off the sharp points on the dew claws as well. Work slowly and prudently and don't expect to complete the job in one session. It may take several attempts. File off any residual, rough edges that could scratch either you or your pig.

A pig will usually give you "notice" if you are get-ting too close to the quick. She will flinch or try to get up. Listen to this signal and back the trimmer off a bit. If you should accidentally cut too far, have some baking flour close by to apply to the area that is bleeding. This should stop it momentarily.

The most effective tool I've found is a goat/sheep hoof trimmer that looks much like a pair of small pruners. If you are unable to locate a trimmer tool that you like at the hardware or farm supply store, you can order an excellent hoof trimmer from Jeffers Vet Supply.

Regularly exercising your pig on concrete or securing an asphalt shingle to an area your piggy frequently walks upon (such as an entrance ramp), will minimize your toe-trimming duties. Set up a passive pedicure situation by placing concrete patio tiles where your pig waters (as an outside application). When setting up a concrete pedicure platform, be sure it is large enough that all four feet pass over it. I recently made a very successful watering station comprised of twelve-inch square concrete patio tiles that are available at lumber, hardware and garden centers. The area is three blocks wide by four blocks long, with the water dish at the back. Every time piggy goes for a drink, her hooves are receiving a little carefree filing. If you simply cannot get this job done at home, which is definitely advisable, your veterinarian will be able to complete the task.

By Chris Christensen:

HOOF TRIMMING

Very important. Pigs whose hooves are allowed to grow too long can develop serious leg problems. One of the pig's greatest problems is getting those spindly little legs to support that potbelly. Long hooves shift the weight back and break down the hoof and ankle structure. If the pig is overweight it will, of course, increase the severity of this problem. This is a situation that many pig owners take care of without the help of a vet. You can try sprinkling food on concrete surfaces daily to help your pig wear down his hooves. Beware if the pig is only used to soft surfaces this may be uncomfortable on the pig's legs and could possibly cause hoof cracking. Introduce this process slowly. You can also hold the pig as described earlier and trim the hooves yourself with a cutter, file or even an electric Dremel tool. This will be stressful for both you and the pig. You may be able to slowly train your pig to let you trim his hooves when he's laying down to get belly rubs or when he is eating. Just a little at a time and don't force it.

By Nancy Shepherd:

POOR HOOF & MOUTH CARE

Both Cinjun and Amos had really long, unattended-to hooves. Overgrown toenails can cause major leg problems because of improper weight distribution. Pigs will tend to start toeing out when their hooves are too long. Next, they start walking on the sides of their feet instead of walking straight forward. This is most unhealthy.

Optimally, you teach your pig as a youngster that pedicures are pleasant. Regular attention to your pig's hooves takes only moments and will save you time and trouble, not to mention your pig's well-being. Desensitize your pig to the hoof-trimming tool and the feel of having her feet fondled. Refer to "***Potbellied Pig Information, Please!***" for details on how to give a toe job. If you will make a routine of walking your pig on concrete surfaces, hoof trimming will be minimal. Should you decide to begin a walking regimen on concrete, start slowly as it will take a while for your pig's legs to adjust to this new, hard surface and don't overdo it.

Tusks may or may not present a problem. Some-times tusks grow incorrectly causing your pig discomfort when eating. Check for this situation if piglet goes off feed. If you don't mind looking at tusks and are not worried about scratches on furniture, you may choose not to trim the tusks of a docile, neutered male. A barrow most likely will not even show tusks until he is well over two years old. For safety reasons, however, it's a good idea to have your veterinarian give your pig a tusk trim.

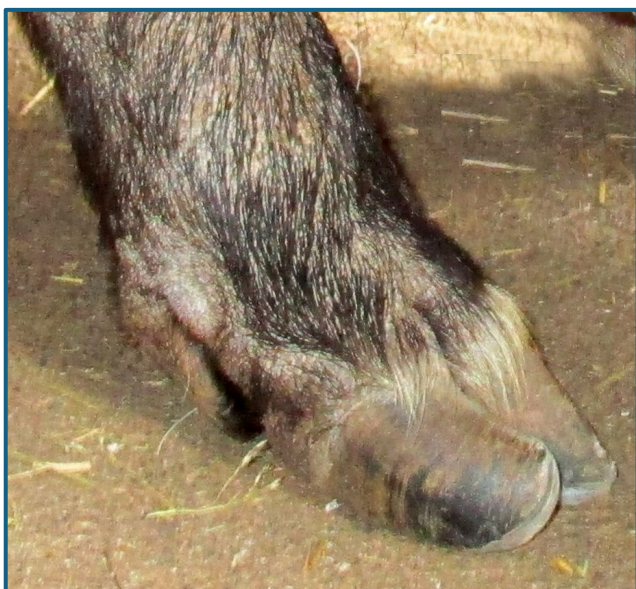
Having a pet pig is not unlike having a child. You must provide all the pig's needs to ensure it has a safe, healthy and happy life. It is also your job to provide a stimulating and challenging environment with opportunities for your pig to grow intellectually. Discipline, quality time, proper diet and routine health care are four ways to circumvent common pet pig problems.

Enjoy The Following Hoof Trimming Photos

BEFORE HOOF TRIMMING



AFTER HOOF TRIMMING



THIS IS CALLED THE “COLE” HOLD

By Patty Hill



HOOF TRIMMING TOOLS I USE

By Patty Hill



Folding Chair



Plastic Stool



2-Old Towels

- 1) Chair is for the holder
- 2) Stool is for the pig's butt to sit on
- 3) 2-old towels: 1- is for the pig's snout or you can use a old sock--1-the other is for the top of the stool
- 4) Please don't hold or grab pig's legs



VIDEO LINKS: BY PATTY HILL

This is how we hold pigs. It is called "The Cole Hold"

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dqm5no2pljQ>

This shows how we let the pig down after trimming

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c3pr0F7wtku>