

Nail Clipping

By Kealy Melavirta (Bunghee & Odyssey Cavy studs)

How often and why? We cut our Guinea pigs' nails once a month at the very least to prevent discomfort or damage. I suggest clipping more regularly or at least tuck them under your arm as if you were going to cut their nails so your guinea pig get a bit more used to it and should make less of a fuss, they can be very squirmy and you don't want to cut too much off. If you do not cut your guinea pig's nails, they can curl under and into their foot pads which may cause, swelling, infection and cause them to be unable to use that foot.

Tools:

You can use pet nail clipper; you can find mini versions for guinea pigs online or at some chain pet stores like pet barn.

Downside is you can only approach the nail from one side



There is guillotine style clipper, but I do not recommend them as I find them harder to use and it is a lot easier to accidentally slip and cut too far, it's quite hard to cut off a little at a time. (On occasion you may find your guinea pig has an extremely thick nail on it's back foot, these can be used to trim them as the nail will not fit into smaller sized clippers).



I prefer to use human nail clippers; I find it helpful to be able to get more angles and its easier to take off a little bit at a time which is useful for black nails.



It helps to keep your guinea pig's favorite treat on hand to feed them throughout the clipping process.

How to cut your guinea pig's nails. (ft porkie)



Step 1: put your Guinea pig on your lap or on a table, you may choose to put a towel down first.



Step 2: use your arm to hold your Guinea pig against your body, do not squeeze too tight but hold them firm enough that they can't easily back up and escape. Hold the front paw with the hand of the same arm and this will leave your other hand free to use the clippers.



Step 3: there is two different methods you can use to clip the back claws.

**1: you can hold your Guinea pig with its back against your torso with your arm across its tummy holding the back paw; or
2: lay it on its back, holding it firm against your body. note: I find this to be the easiest way, but most Guinea pigs do not like being flipped on their back and will wriggle more, most of my Guinea pigs have had their nails cut this way from a young age.**



alternatively, if you have a second person you can get one to hold the Guinea pig like this while the other cuts all the nails.



One hand around the torso holding it upright, belly out with one hand supporting the rump and holding the back feet.

How much to cut (about the kwik):

Like other animals, a Guinea pig's nails have something called a kwik. The kwik is a small fleshy bit that is covered by the toe nail that holds blood vessels and nerves. If you don't keep up on trimming their nails the kwik will grow longer with the nail. In order to cut an over grown nail down to an appropriate length you will have to cut small bit off over a couple of weeks, instead of going straight in and cutting a nail in half. In white or light colored nails you can see the kwik easily as it will appear as a pink line.

Dark nails: It is a lot harder to identify the kwik in black or dark nails, especially if you have never cut guinea pigs nails before. I personally just cut the sharp tips off, cut a slither or slowly cut the nails a small portion at a time, gradually going shorter (and not cutting too short in one go).

In the case of cutting the kwik, there will be blood. Apply styptic powder (plain flour if you don't have this) to clot the blood. If you really aren't confident enough in cutting your Guinea pig's nails yourself, you can go to your local vet or stop by a local cavy club for assistance.

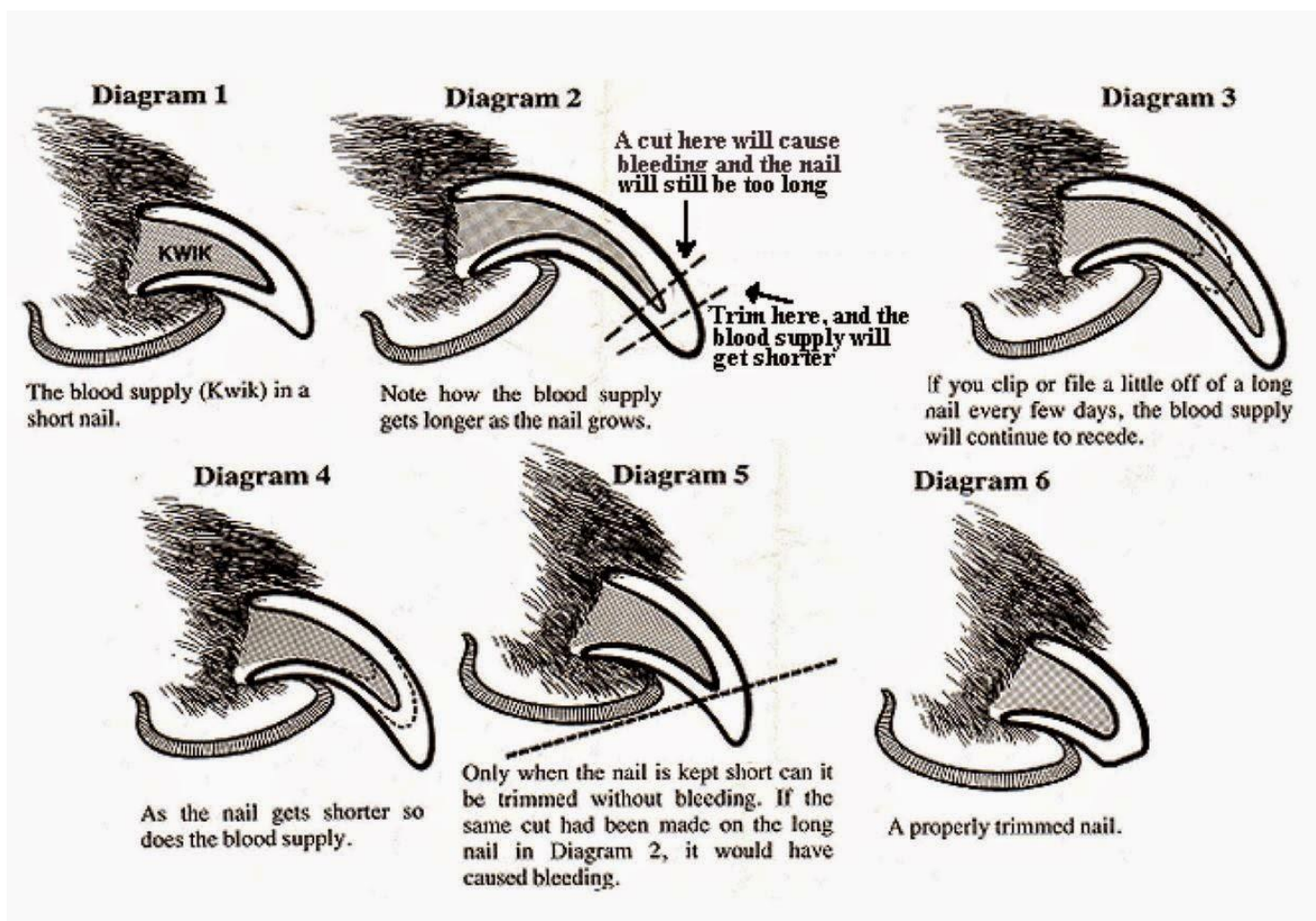


Photo from - <https://www.allguineapig.com/guinea-pig-nails/>