

Lesley Richman Education Article Burns OR

Many thanks to Keith Smith of boergoats.com for allowing us to use these excerpts from his article about hoof trimming.

The goal of hoof trimming is to allow your goat to walk normal. If the nails are allowed to grow excessively long your goat will not be able to walk efficiently or correctly. There is an increased risk of hoof rot and other infectious diseases. This is not an article on show trimming. This is the bare minimum we feel is necessary for our "field" goats.

The first thing to consider is your selection of tools.

- Rasp – used to flatten the bottom of the hoof after trimming.
- Trimmers – select a sharp pair. We use the "orange" handled ones from Caprine Supply.
- Knife – a very sharp knife. Works well in reaching those areas your trimmers can't get to.
Also good for flattening the sole and for removing embedded rocks and thorns/
- Brush – it helps if you brush off the junk so you can see what you are doing.
- Blood Stop Powder – If you're careful and lucky you won't need this.

First, remove any dirt from the outside of the hoof and then dig dirt, mud and nanny berries from the bottom of the hoof. A good tool for this is a hoof pick or nail. You can use the tips of your trimmer but by doing so you'll cut their life in about 1/3.

Hoof trimming takes time and is physically stressful for both you and the goat. It's very important that a comfortable position is established. We prefer having the goat secured on a fitting stand or other raised platform.

The first cut is to nip away the front of the nail. This makes it easier to cut the sides of the nails by opening a slot for you to fit the trimmers into.

Once the front tip of the nail is removed it's easy to insert the trimmers to cut the sides of the nail. You only need to cut it back even with the sole (also called the frog) at this point.

Continue to trim the sides around one toe and then across the heel. Repeat the process on the other toe.

The frog and heel can be trimmed flat with either a knife or the rasp. When using the knife, cut from the toe toward the heel. When using the rasp go from the heel to the toe.

This is the point where you might need the blood stop powder. It depends on how deep you go with the knife. A good rule is to stop when you see pink. Same thing goes for the rasp.

The nail, sole and heel should be trimmed parallel with the growth bands around the outside of the hoof and we are seeing pink on the sole.

Keith and Lucinda Smith are retired Boer goat breeders and now operate the internet Boer goat magazine www.boergoats.com. Thank you again for letting me use your information.