

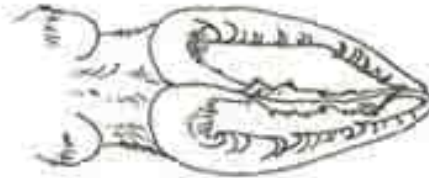
Hoof Trimming – Additional comments by P.J Alexander

Hoof Trimming is an acquired skill that takes quite a bit of practice to perfect. The tools you will need include a good pair of hoof shears. Do not try to save money on this particular tool. Hoof trimming shears are available in any animal supply house and come in many shapes and designs. You will also need a hand held carpenter's plane, the kind that looks a little like a cheese grater.

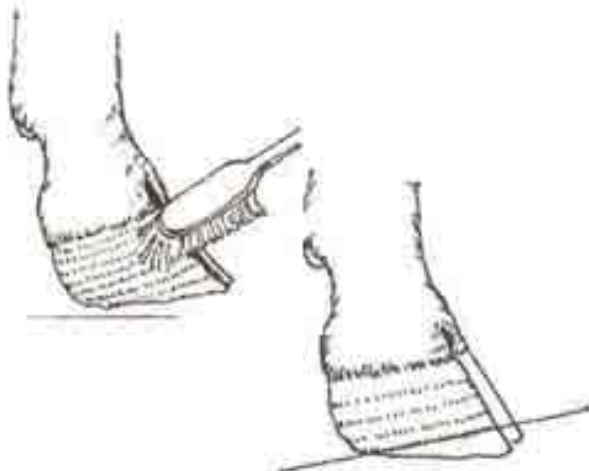
Hooves that are overgrown will turn under around the sides and may even grow out in front like elf shoes.



Start by cleaning the manure and crud out from the toes with a hoof pick or the point of your shears. Then trim off the overgrown sides down to the white sole.



Now take a tooth brush and some water and scrub the sides of the hoof until you can see the little growth lines that are circling the hoof parallel with the hair at the top of the hoof. This is the correct angle for the trimmed hoof to end up.



The toes of the hoof grow faster than the heel. Because of this, many people tend to trim at the wrong angle - like this -----> This will cause the foot to roll backwards, forcing the pasterns to break down.



Start trimming slices off the hard side nail and the soft, white center to level out the hoof. Trim down until you can see the white change to pink. Trim the heel only down until it is level with the growth ring that the toe is on. The toe and heel should be at the same level.



There may be some little flaps coming out of the middle, between the hooves, these will need to be snipped off.



Then, using your carpenter's plane, and holding both toes together, so they will come out level, plane off the entire bottom of the hoof (including the heel) until it is level. If the hoof oozes little pin-pricks of blood, don't worry,



but definitely stop trimming for today. It is not a bad idea to brush a little iodine on it.

Sometimes, the heel is the part that seems to grow too fast, causing the goat to walk on the back of the hoof above the heel. In this case, be sure that you trim the hooves more often, and that you are not leaving the heel so long that the goat is walking on 'high heels'. If the hoof was drastically overgrown, and you didn't get it into the right shape, it is better to come back to it later than to make the goat lame, or risk serious bleeding and infection, by cutting too much at one time. Try again in one to three weeks. If it still isn't right, come back in another two or three weeks. Sometimes it takes a while to whip a goat's hooves into perfect shape.

Goat's hooves need to be trimmed regularly (and don't forget the bucks!). That will mean different things depending on your ranch and conditions. If your goats have plenty of rocks to walk on, or are in a large herd that travels over many acres a day, you might be able to escape this chore for four to six months. Some people even build low platforms of rock and cement for the goats to play on to help them keep their hooves in shape. In most cases, when the goats are walking on grass or in pens, hooves should be trimmed every four to twelve weeks.