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The Top Three Solutions for Increasing Traction for Your Dog

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Whether your dog is an agility competitor, has suffered an injury, or is simply growing older, the ability to grip the surface they are on is key to overall function. This is called traction, and it's more important than most pet owners realize.

If you have ever fallen – maybe you lost your balance or slipped on ice – you've experienced the fear associated with losing traction and the associated pain or injury. It's also likely you were really scared it could happen again, especially as you age.

Dogs can experience similar feelings about slipping and falling. Fear, apprehension, and a lack of confidence all play a role in movement, and when faced with the decision to cross slippery floors or stay where they are, they may choose to stay put. Additionally, conditions such as osteoarthritis, neurologic disease, injury to the muscle, tendons, or ligaments of the foot can all contribute to the inability to flex the paw and create grip. Imagine how isolating it might feel to be stuck in one small section of your home due to fear.

So, what can we do to help them? Here are three simple solutions you can try immediately:

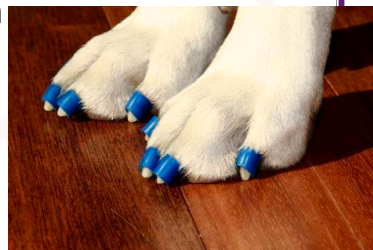
1. Change the surface your dog walks on in the home.

Dogs that live in homes with tile, vinyl, or hardwood flooring experience a lot of slipping and sliding. This can seem cute as a puppy, but as dogs age, their ability to travel slick surfaces with ease becomes more difficult. That fun as a puppy can quickly turn to fear and trepidation as an adult dog.

Place foam tiles or yoga mats in key locations such as in front of your pet's food and water dishes, points of transition such as the bottom/top of the stairs, over thresholds, off dog beds or out of crates. Consider using non-slip rugs and runners. Try [Ruggables](#) for lots of washable, yet stylish designs of various shapes and sizes. For stairs, try [TreadSafe](#) carpet treads. They have non-slip backing and are also washable.

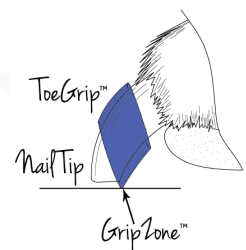
2. Apply something to your dog's paws to assist with traction.

Flexing the paw and digging in with their toenails is a dog's natural response to create traction. However, hard nails cannot grip hard surfaces, so it's important to add something to the paws that can help dogs establish grip. Consider the following as something you can apply to your dog to assist with traction.



Photos by ToeGrips.com

ToeGrips: ToeGrips are medical-grade rubber cylinders that fit onto a dog's toenails and provide traction. They are great for senior dogs, dogs recovering from surgery, arthritic dogs, and dogs with amputations or using wheelchairs. When applied, ToeGrips® make contact with the floor creating a "Grip Zone" that instantly provides traction giving the dog the ability to grip more naturally.



Pawfriction: PawFriction is a coating made of rubberized granules that adhere to the paw pads with a medical-grade adhesive that helps prevent slipping and splaying. As dogs age, their once soft, pliable, textured paw pads become hard and smooth much like wearing down the tread of a sneaker. Pawfriction essentially roughens up the pads of the foot and adds a bit of tackiness allowing for better traction.

Pawz boots: These rubberized waterproof boots were created to protect dogs' feet from harsh weather conditions such as snow/ice and associated salt/ice melt or hot pavement; however, they are just as good on surfaces where a bit more traction is needed. Pawz® boots are not padded or cumbersome and conform around the foot so dogs still get all-important feedback from the ground. The boots fit snugly and stay put without the use of straps or buckles. However, dogs should be supervised at all times when wearing Pawz as they do present a possible choking hazard. Further, they do not allow the sweat from dog's feet to evaporate, so should only be worn for short periods.

Musher's Secret: Help senior pets with dry, smooth feet by adding a very thin layer of wax or balm such as Musher's Secret. Obviously too much can create an oily effect and make their feet more slippery, but gently roughing up smooth pads with an Emery Board and applying some Musher's Secret can moisten and aid traction.

There are also various kinds of traction socks on the market. Be certain to get the correct size. Again, do not leave dogs unsupervised with boots or socks on for fear of ingesting. Socks can also be tricky to keep on, yet applying any strapping to secure them can have a potential harmful tourniquet effect.

3. Focus on foot care to improve traction.

There are a few simple things we can do on a regular basis to help with grip and traction.

Keep hairy feet trimmed. Think of fur as socks and paw pad as shoes. They need their shoes for traction; socks are slippery!

Care for your dog's toenails. Keep all nails trimmed (including the dew claw) to their proper length. If nails are long, they will not only push the pads needed for traction off the floor, they will alter your dog's entire biomechanics and possibly lead to arthritic changes and injury. Keep in mind that senior dogs who are less active do not wear down their toenails like a younger more active dog. Therefore, senior dogs may need more frequent nail trimming. On average, a dog will have their nails trimmed every 4-8 weeks depending on how fast they grow and how active they are. You should not hear your dog's toenails on the floor, nor should their nails touch the floor when your pet is standing in a relaxed position.

We cannot underestimate the importance of traction in the life of our beloved dogs. We hope you now have some things to consider if you see your dog losing traction, grip, or seeming off-balance.

If you like this article, check out our podcast, [PetAbility](#), for even more information to help your pet lead their best life!

Note: No payment was provided for any product endorsements in this article.

Excuse me!

Yes, you, the human.

Hi! I'm a Dachshund and I'm prone to back problems. If you have a magnificent dog like me or know someone who does, it may be a good idea to share with them the important information in Dodger's Digest's free literature.



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