



## **TRIMMING YOUR CAT'S NAILS**

- Find a quiet spot in your home where your cat enjoys relaxing and can sit on your lap comfortably. Timing is also helpful in this situation – the best times are after mealtime or when you notice your cat is sleepy.
- Practice gentle touching with your cat's paws. Take one paw between your fingers and softly massage for a few seconds. If your cat is uncomfortable and pulls away, do not squeeze, pinch, or hold tightly – just calmly keep in contact with the cat's paw. When your cat is still again, give the paw pad a small amount of pressure so that the nail extends out, then release the paw immediately and give a treat. Do this daily until you have done all ten toes.
- Get your cat acquainted with the nail clippers. While your cat is sitting on your lap, present the clippers to your cat. If your cat sniffs the clippers, that is great! Place a treat on the clippers and have your cat take the treat from the clippers. Mimicking nail trim noise is a great practice exercise. This can be accomplished by placing a dry spaghetti noodle in the clippers. While massaging your cat's toe with the nail extending out, clip the spaghetti noodle with the clippers while still holding your cat's paw gently. Quickly release your cat's toe and present a treat.
- The pink part of a cat's nail is called the quick. This is where the nerves and blood vessels are located, so it is super sensitive. Avoid cutting this area; otherwise, you will have an unhappy cat on your hands. Trim the white part of the claw only. Being cautious is a good thing, so we recommend trimming a small amount of the nail at a time.
- When you are ready to trim your cat's nails, place your cat in your lap facing away from you. Massage your cat's paw pads and press lightly on a toe extending the nail. Trim the white tip, release the paw, and offer a treat. If your cat did well, trim another nail. Do not trim more than two nails in one setting if you notice your cat is uncomfortable. Space out the trimming. To reduce stress, do not trim all of your cat's nails at one time.
- It is recommended to trim a cat's nails every two weeks. If your cat will not let you trim its nails safely, seek help from your vet or a groomer.
- Remember to trim nails when both you and your cat are calm. Do not raise your voice at your cat during a nail trim. You want to create an environment where your cat feels safe and comfortable, and gains your trust for ongoing nail trimmings.

Please do NOT declaw your cat. This painful surgery involves amputating the end of a cat's toes, can lead to lifelong medical issues, and cause litter box problems. Trim nails regularly, provide your cat with appropriate scratching posts or scratching pads, and ask your veterinarian about soft plastic covers for your cat's claws.