

Trimming Your Cat's Nails with a Clipper

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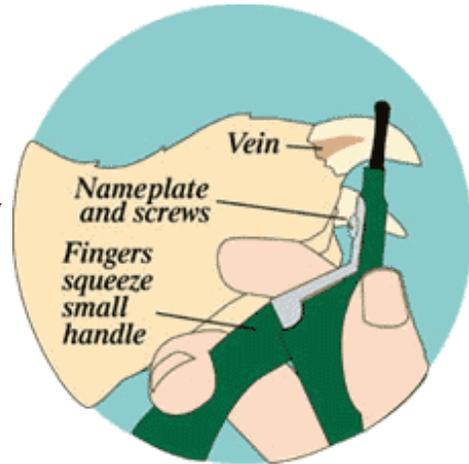
Trimming your cat's nails is not just a part of grooming, but is important for your cat's health as well. Untrimmed nails can cause a variety of problems including broken nails that are painful and can bleed. A good indication that a cat's nails are too long is that her unclipped nails get caught in the carpet, furniture, or your clothing.

How many of us put off clipping our cat's nails until the inevitable veterinary check-up comes around and the veterinarian must do it? If you are like many cat owners, you may be hesitant to trim your cat's nails because you are afraid of cutting the quick of the nail, which may cause pain or bleeding. Once you learn how to do it, clipping your cat's nails is almost as easy as clipping your own.

When you are trimming your cat's nails, you are only cutting away the excess. Recognizing what is excess and where the nerves and blood vessels begin is what you need to know to make nail trimming a painless process for both you and your cat.

To trim your cat's nails:

1. Assemble what you will need - a high quality pair of trimmers and some styptic powder, such as Kwik-Stop, CutStop Styptic Pads, or other product to stop bleeding if you nick the quick.
 2. You may want to sit on the floor with your cat, hold your cat in your lap, or have someone hold your cat on a table. Hold your cat's paw firmly and push on her pads to extend the nail. Locate where the quick ends. With clear or light nails, it is easy to see the pink color where the quick ends.
- Using a nail trimmer for cats, cut the nail below the quick on a 45-degree angle, with the cutting end of the nail clipper toward the end of the nail. You will be cutting off the finer point. In cats, the quick is generally easy to see, and you can cut the excess away with one cut.
 - In some cases, if the nails are brittle, the cut may tend to splinter the nail. In these cases, file the nail in a sweeping motion starting from the back of the nail and following the curve to the tip. Several strokes will remove any burrs and leave the nail smooth.
 - If your cat will tolerate it, do all four feet this way. If she will not, take a break. And do not forget the dewclaws. If not trimmed, dewclaws can grow so long they curl up and grow into the soft tissue, like a painful ingrown toe nail.
 - If you accidentally cut the quick, wipe off the blood and apply Kwik-Stop or styptic powder to stop the bleeding. It is not serious and will heal in a very short time.



Some valuable tips:

- Remember, it is better to trim a small amount on a regular basis.
- Invest in a good pair of nail trimmers in an appropriate size for your cat. They can last a lifetime.
- Make trimming time fun and not a struggle. Trimming your cat's nails does not have to be a chore or unpleasant. If your cat is not used to having his nails trimmed, start slowly, and gradually work up to simply holding his toes firmly for 15-30 seconds. Do not let him mouth or bite at you. It can take daily handling for a week or more to get some cats used to this. When your cat tolerates having his feet held, clip just one nail, and if he is good, praise him and give him a tiny treat. Wait, and then at another time, do another nail. Continue until all nails have been trimmed. Slowly, you will be able to cut several nails in one sitting, and finally all the nails in one session.