



How To Trim Your Pet's Nails



Step 1: Desensitize your pet to having their toes touched

- Playing with your pet's toes and frequently touching them will get your dog/cat used to having their feet handled. This makes future nail trimmings a lot easier!

Step 2: Evaluate your pet's temperament

- If your pet is showing signs of aggression or severe stress DO NOT proceed! You should never risk getting injured by your pet. Call the clinic and leave a message for your veterinarian. There are some anxiety medications that can be safely given at home to make nail trims less stressful for both you and your pet.

Step 3: Get your pet used to the trimmers or dremel

- Sometimes it is as simple as a sound that triggers anxiety in your pet. Positive reinforcement is going to be your most valuable asset in this situation. Turn the dremel on, or open and close the trimmers several times. Reward your pet after the sound so they can become comfortable with it.

Step 4: Be cautious of the quick and be prepared

- The "quick" is the soft cuticle that contains the blood vessel and nerves that run through your pet's nails. While we try to avoid cutting this vascular structure, sometimes it is hard to avoid. If your pet has white nails, the quick can be easily identified as the pink triangle that appears inside of the nail. You can use this as a landmark to determine how much you can take off of your pet's nails. Cutting the quick can be painful for your pet and can cause bleeding.
 - We highly recommend purchasing a pet styptic powder to stop bleeding if you happen to trim your pet's nail too short, ESPECIALLY if your pet's nails are black or brown in color where the quick is not easily visible. If you do not have this on hand, you can also use flour.

Step 5: Trim slowly and carefully

- Hold your dogs paw up and isolate one nail at a time, cutting from top to bottom. When possible, use the quick as a landmark and trim a little in front of it to avoid cutting too short. If your pet's nails are dark, trim a little at a time. Check the nail head on after each trim to ensure you aren't cutting back too far. If it appears whitish, you are still in the "dead zone" and can continue to trim a little more. As you get closer to the quick, the center of the nail will appear black or even a little pink, STOP once you get to that point and move on to the next nail.
 - Distractions can help! If your pet is food motivated you can try smearing peanut butter or spray cheese on a cutting board and let them lick that while you try trimming.

Step 6: REWARD, REWARD, REWARD

- Always reward your pet with lots of treats and praise after each successful trim. This will help teach them that there is nothing to fear when you are trimming their nails and make it a positive experience for them!