



How to Trim A Cat's Nails

Trimming a cat's claws every few weeks is a vital part of maintaining the animal's hygiene. Regular trimming not only protects the health of a cat's handlers, but also guarantees the well-being of adopters' couches and armchairs. But, if the idea of trimming your cat's claws has you biting your nails, know that all it takes is some patience, a little help from a more experienced person and plenty of practice to sharpen your skills.

Stay on the Cutting Edge

- There are plenty of tools available to trim a cat's claws; use whichever one works best for you and the animals.
- Some people prefer a special pair of scissor modified to hold a cat's claw in place, while others prefer human nail clippers. Still, others choose plier-like clippers or those with a sliding "guillotine" blade.
- Whatever your tool of choice, be sure the blade remains sharp; the blunt pressure from dull blades may hurt an animal and cause a nail to split or bleed.

Take Paws

- If you approach a cat with a sharp object in one hand while trying to grab a paw with the other, odds are you will come up empty-handed. Because cats' temperaments and dispositions vary greatly, there is no "perfect" way to handle a cat while trimming his claws.
- Some cats do well with no restraint at all, but most cats need to be held firmly, but gently, to make sure that no one gets hurt.
- Try resting the cat in the crook of one arm while holding one paw with the other hand.
- Or, place the animal on an examination table and lift one paw at a time. You may even be able to convince a particularly sociable cat to lay back in your lap.
- If you have a helper, ask him/her to hold the cat while you clip the nails, or just ask him to rub the cat's nose, or offer up a special treat.
- If you have a difficult time trimming a cat's rear claws, try gently scruffing the cat and laying him on his side while someone else trims the claws.

Take a Little Off the Top

- Now that you're in position and the cat is in position, put the claw in the right position, too.
- Take a paw in your hand, curl your fingers into a fist and use your thumb to gently press down in the joint just above the claw.

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- When the claw extends, quickly, but carefully, snip off the sharp tip and no more.
- Do not get too close to the pink part of the nail called “the quick”; this is where blood vessels and nerve ending lie.
- Just like the pink part of a human fingernail, the quick is very sensitive; cutting into this area will likely hurt the animal and cause bleeding. If this happens, apply a little pressure to the very tip of the claw (without squeezing the entire paw, which would only increase the blood flow) or dip the nail in a bit of styptic powder or flour.
- Then leave the cat alone, being sure to check on him occasionally.
- If you are not able to trim all 18 nails at once, do not worry. Few cats remain patient for more than a few minutes, so take what you can get, praise the animal for cooperating and then be on the lookout for the next opportunity—maybe even a catnap—to cut things down to size.

Source: The Humane Society of the United States