

Nail-Trimming Tips

Trimming your cat's claws doesn't need to be difficult. Follow these tips to trim nails properly.

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To clip your cat's nails, you will need a pair of cat nail cutters. Once you feel confident handling your pet, place it on a table or countertop. Run your hands over its body and talk to it in a loving tone to help both of you relax. Most cats are comfortable lying on their bellies. Hover over the cat using your own body to keep it in place.

First, lift the left front paw. Do not lift it too high or twist it out to the side; it should be tucked near the cat for your own control and the cat's comfort and safety. Press down slightly on the soft paw pads. This activates the nails' "push-button" feature, automatically extending them for you to see. Clip only the clear, hooked portion, not the pink part closer to the paw, which is actually a vein. If you clip too close and nick it, it will bleed and cause the cat discomfort. It's not a major injury if you accidentally nick this vein. A dab of styptic powder or a rub from a soft bar of soap will stop the bleeding immediately.

With the cat still lying on your table or counter, proceed to the rear nails, lifting each paw only as much as needed to expose the nail. For squirmy cats, you may need a helper to hold the neck scruff so the cat won't twist and escape. When you are done, place the cat on the floor. Don't be surprised if it makes a hasty retreat. If you succeed at performing this important chore, you have good reason to feel proud. Keeping your cat's nails well-trimmed will significantly cut down on damage to your furniture and make life much more pleasant.

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