

TRIMMING YOUR CAT'S TOENAILS

Niles Animal Hospital and Bird Medical Center

7278 N. Milwaukee Ave. Niles, IL 60714

(847)-647-9325 FAX (847)-647-8498

www.nilesanimalhospital.com

It's that time again – time to trim your kitty's toenails. But while some cats don't seem to mind when you're trimming their nails, others just plain don't like it. And they are not at all shy about letting you know how they feel – by squirming and scratching. Following these suggestions for a proper nail trim might help you give your cat a not-so-arduous manicure.

- Start young. The earlier you start clipping your kitty's claws, the better used to it she will be. Frequent trims when your cat is young will help diminish any fear. Have your veterinarian show you how to do it the first time.
- Learn the anatomy. Within the center of each toenail is the blood and nerve supply for the nail called the quick. Most cats have light colored nails so you can see the quick, a pinkish area in the middle of the nail. Cutting into the quick will result in pain and bleeding.
- Use the proper instruments. There are a variety of nail trimmers available at pet stores or your veterinarian's office. Human nail trimmers generally do not work – unless your pet is a young kitten with soft clear nails. See Toenail Trimmers.

A CLIP OR AN OVERHAUL

Before you start clipping, determine how much needs to be trimmed. The basic rule of thumb is that the nail, which curls downward, should be even with the paw pad. Whatever hangs over must be clipped.

PROCEDURE

- Hold your cat firmly or have someone else help, and if your kitty is not used to getting her nails clipped, be ready for her to squirm.
- Gently squeeze down on your cat's toe knuckles so that the nails are spread out and exposed. Place the trimmer in your dominant hand.
- Eyeball the quick and aim a few millimeters below it. If you cut into the quick, referred to as "quicking," it will hurt your cat and the nail will bleed.
- Place the trimmer flush with the pad, place the nail in the trimmer and remove the excess nail. For cats, removing just the sharp pointed tip is often enough.
- Although you will take great care not to hurt your pet, sometimes accidents happen and you will cut into the quick. Have silver nitrate products on hand – you can get them at your veterinarian's office or pet store. You can also use flour or cornstarch to stop the bleeding. If that doesn't work, apply a light bandage for about 15 minutes. If the bleeding continues, call your veterinarian.