



## Nail trimming

First of all, keep your cat's nails trimmed short. This is easy to learn to do, and should be considered an essential part of your grooming responsibility. Have your vet show you how to do this the first time or ask the Adoption Counselor at the PEI Humane Society for a demonstration on one of the shelter cats.

Like our fingernails, cats' claws grow continuously. Some cats may only need clipping every few months. Others may need it every few weeks. It is important to check your cat's toenails at least once a month. It is easier to clip often, taking less of the claw than to wait too long and have to deal with little daggers. For us to trim our own nails regularly is usually a fairly simple, stress-free procedure. Doing the same for our cats can be more difficult.

Cats that stay indoors may need their nails trimmed more regularly than cats who go outside-even if they use their scratching posts often. Scratching on a post helps to remove the "dead" parts of the nail, thus making the nail thinner and sharper. Nails that have not been trimmed for a long time may grow in a circular shape causing the tips to grow into the cat's paw pad, or they may become too thick which sometimes happens with older or less active cats. It can also lead to infection. This is why regular trimming is essential.

### Some important tips:

- Handle your cat's paws regularly when he's relaxed which will allow him to become used to the feeling of having his paws touched. He may then be less upset at claw clipping time.
- Ask someone to help you; it is much easier than trying to hold a struggling cat and wield clippers simultaneously. A "scruff-hold" can be used to restrain the cat. This involves firmly, yet gently restraining the cat by holding his scruff and supporting the rest of the cat's body. While one person holds, the helper can do the actual clipping.
- Before you attempt it on your own, have someone experienced demonstrate nail trimming for you.
- Choose a time when your cat is calm; naptime may be the best. It is possible that you may only be able to do one toe at a time, especially at first.
- Get appropriate clippers for cats' claws - do not use human nail clippers or scissors!

### How to do it:

- Check the cat's paws for dirt; although they usually keep their own feet clean; you will want to be able to see the claw clearly. You can extend the cat's nail by picking up the cat's foot and gently applying a little pressure on the top and bottom of the toe just behind the nail.
- Make sure there is enough light. Having the cat's paw between the source of light and yourself makes it much easier to see where you need to cut.
- Keep the clippers perpendicular to the nail. Look for the "quick" in the cat's nail. Notice how far into the nail the quick extends. (The quick is a vein. You can see it as the pinkish area inside the nail.)
- The clipper is best placed about 1/8 inch forward of the quick. If your cat will sit still long enough, you may want to gently file the tips after cleaning.



### **If you trim the nail too close:**

Your cat may give a cry and try to pull away from you. You may observe a small bit of blood on the end of the nail. Wipe the blood away with a tissue or paper towel. Dab some flour or styptic powder (available in pet stores) on the tip to stop the bleeding. In the future, you will want to cut the nails a little further away from the quick.