

The Pawdicure



Purpose

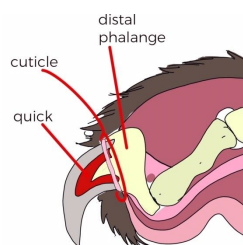
The toenails of cats are constantly growing. The growth pattern is that of an onion. The middle of the nail will produce a new layer of nail and the outer layer will be shed. You have probably noticed these dead bits of nail around your cats scratching post. If they stop scratching due to arthritis or the lack of scratching resources, the outer nail will remain in place, causing very thick and dense nails.

Exposure

Early subjection to nail trimmings from a very young age is encouraged. When kittens are young their nails, like babies, are very soft and easy to work with. Being shown the nail clippers and manipulation of paws early on in relation to treats will help develop positive memories of these events and objects.

Anatomy

Cat nails are unique as they are actually an extension of the last finger bone; they can retract as well. To expose your cat's nails, gently push the top



and the bottom of their toe. The nail should protrude outwardly. The anatomical parts of a nail include the Cuticle, Quick (the blood supply), and the distal phalanx bone.

Procedure

- 1) Gather your supplies: Human nail clippers are the easiest to use and lots of treats.
- 2) Place your cat on your lap facing away from you, cats do not like hands coming at their faces.
- 3) Pick up your first paw and expose the nail.
- 4) Trim ONLY the clear/white part. Do not cut anything that looks pink in colour, that is the quick.
- 5) Repeat until all the nails are trimmed.

Reward often with treats and if your cat is struggling away from you, take a break. Set a goal of getting only 1 toe trimmed a day until your cat is more comfortable with the experience.

Alternatives

If your cat is not a fan of having its nails trimmed at home there are some alternatives available. The first is to bring them to a fear free certified veterinarian or a fear free certified grooming to have their nails trimmed professionally. This will require you to give your cat some sedation at home, prior to arrival. Another alternative is applying soft paws, these will help if your cat is scratching the furniture or other undesirable objects. Tetly (pictured above) loves his festive soft paws.

In the past, declawing was also an alternative, but as it is effectively amputating the last digit of the finger - it has fallen out of favor and has been banned by many provinces, including B.C. This is because it can lead to pain and sensitivity for the rest of the cat's life as well as risk of the nails growing back improperly. It also contributes to difficulty walking.

Visit:

www.FearFreeHappyHomes.com OR www.PacificCatClinic.com

for more tips and tricks on how to keep your home Fear Free.