Desensitization & Counterconditioning

Nail Trim Training for Kittens

Train your kitten to be comfortable with getting their nails trimmed by using desensitization (slowly increasing exposure) and counterconditioning (providing lots of treats and rewards). By slowly building on steps toward a full trim, we can minimize stress for both kittens and caretakers!

Slowly work through each step below, repeating as you need and providing lots of treats, snuggles, or other rewards.

Start handling legs

Start by placing your kitten on your lap or a comfortable surface and start gently handling their body & legs, both front & back. Be sure to give lots of treats & snuggles.



02 Start handling paws

Continue handling legs & slowly move to handling your kitten's paws. Again, giving lots of rewards!

Gently press paw pads

While handling paws, slowly start to press on your kitten's paw pads to expose their nails.





04 Touch clippers to nails

Once you're able to handle your kitten's paws, slowly bring the clippers to touch the nails. Repeat on different nails, on both the front & back paws.

05 Trim the nails

Once your kitten is comfortable with the clippers touching their nails, start to actually clip the nails. BE SURE TO AVOID THE QUICK (the darker pigmented area near the base of the nail).

