

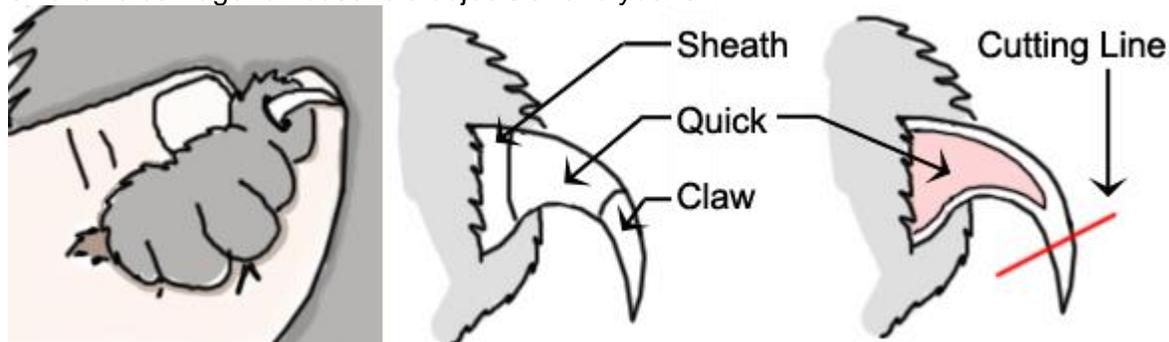


How to Trim Cat Claws

To help keep them sharp, cats keep their claws retracted except when they're needed. As the claws grow too long and become curved, they can't be retracted completely. If the nails become too long they can grow into the cat's paw pads and cause infections. You should clip off the sharp tips of your cat's claws on all four feet every couple weeks. Clipping your cat's claws will also help prevent them from becoming snagged in carpets, fabrics and skin.

Before trimming your cat's claws, accustom her to having her paws handled and squeezed. You can do this by gently petting her legs and paws while giving her a treat. This will help to make it a more pleasant experience. Gradually increase the pressure so that petting becomes gentle squeezing, as you'll need to do this to extend the claw. Continue with the treats until your cat tolerates this kind of touching and restraint. It may take a little longer if she's not used to having her legs or paws handled.

Apply a small amount of pressure to her paw, with your thumb on top of her paw and your index finger underneath, until a claw is extended. You should be able to see the pink or "quick," which is a small blood vessel. Don't cut into this pink portion, as it will bleed and be painful for your cat. If you cut off just the sharp tip of the claw, the "hook," it will dull the claw and prevent extensive damage to household objects and to your skin.



There are several types of claw trimmers designed especially for pets. These are better than your own nail clipper because they won't crush the claw. Until you and your cat have become accustomed to the routine, one foot a day is enough of a challenge. **Do not push** to do all four at once, or you'll both have only negative memories of claw clippers!

If you need additional help trimming your cat's nails, most pet groomers or vet offices offer nail trimming services.