



## Fear Free Nail Trims

Toe nail trims tend to be a procedure that causes a large amount of stress. We understand that having our pet's nails trimmed is important for their mobility and comfort, as well as our comfort when they jump on us. If your pet is reactive to nail trims, this is very common and will take some training and patience so it can become less stressful.

### Commit to the following:

- No more high stress nail trims.
  - When they say you're done, please respect that. Small positive steps will get you there faster than large (get it done) steps that tend to cause more trauma.
- Consistency - Try to do this training at minimum once a month - More often in the early days. It's easy to remember to trim nails at the same time their monthly heartworm/flea prevention is due. Add it to your calendar!

Environment: Our goal is to create a low stress environment so we don't add stress to our pet's lives.

Music: Find a "Dog Calming" song on YouTube to play during the training sessions. Try to limit other pets and distractions around during the training session.

Pheromones: Adaptil is the pheromone product that is recommended to ALWAYS have around. It can never hurt and could really help, especially with moving and multi-pet households. Spray a towel or dog bed where you will perform the nail trim/training.

Medications: There are calming supplements that are sold over the counter or a stronger medication can be prescribed. Anything you give, make sure to give it 1-2 hours prior to attempting the training.

### Options:

- Treat training - AFTER each clip you can say a keyword (like YES) to mark the behavior and give a tiny treat. String cheese or lunch meat are great options. Start with a goal of one or two nails.
  - Repeat sessions often in the beginning until you can get most of the nails trimmed in one session. Then consider trimming every 4-6 weeks to keep the training fresh in your pets mind and their nails under control.
  - Remember...Touch, key word, then reward!
  - If you reward before you touch (clip), they can learn to think the treat "means" the clip is coming and will decline even their favorite treats.
- Scratcher board - You can build or purchase a scratcher board and train your pet to use it.
- Walks - Consider walking your pet on lava rock or pavement more often to naturally grind down the sharp nail tips
- Chill Protocol - These are medications that can be given prior to nail trims that can help with your pet's anxiety and allow your pet to focus on the training rather than shutting down or being too stressed to learn. This can be used at home or for in-clinic visits. In-clinic safety of your pet, and our staff is our number one priority, so full sedation may be required, until more desensitization training can occur.