

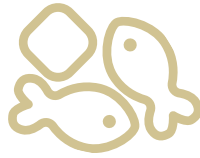
# HANDLING TIPS FOR GROOMING CATS

## FIRST TIME @ GROOMING SALON



### Let cats explore

Allow them to sniff and explore at their own pace



### Meet & treat

Have the groomer greet the cat first and offer treats



### Watch for signs

Watch for signs of relaxation and signs of fear/stress

## ASK FOR CONSENT FIRST!

Before handling the cat, always ask for consent first.

Reach your hand out to allow the cat to come to you



Does the cat reciprocate by making contact or allow petting?

YES



Progress to your next steps

NO



Stop and give the cat space, try again later

**By giving choice** (e.g., having their nails trimmed on the floor vs. on a table), you are allowing the cat some control over a procedure.

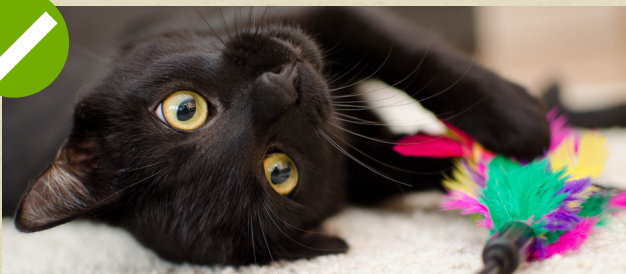
**By giving space** without crowding or restraint, you can quickly reduce a negative response.

## INTRODUCING A CAT TO SOMETHING NEW



### Use

Treats, toys, space, and choice as positive reinforcers when introducing a cat to something new and potentially fearful



### Avoid

Punishment, corrections, discipline, reprimands, and flooding during any new exposure





## WHAT IF...

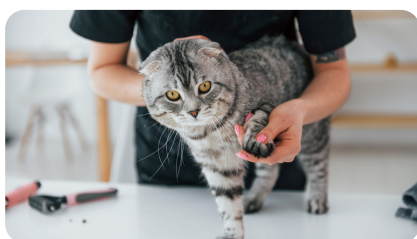
### A cat is afraid of a new grooming tool

Using desensitization and counterconditioning is a useful method of reducing fear to something new, such as a grooming tool.

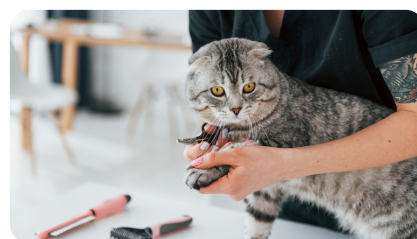
#### Example: nail trimming



Gentle touch on the cat's legs, giving high-value treats



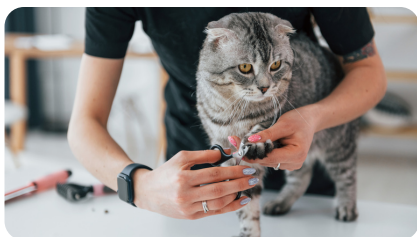
Slowly work the gentle touch down the cat's legs to the paws, giving high-value treats



Slowly start gently pressing on the paw pads to expose nails, giving high-value treats



Slowly bring the clippers to touch the cat's nails without clipping, giving high-value treats



Slowly start clipping one nail at a time, giving high-value treats



Slowly work towards clipping the rest of the nails, giving high-value treats

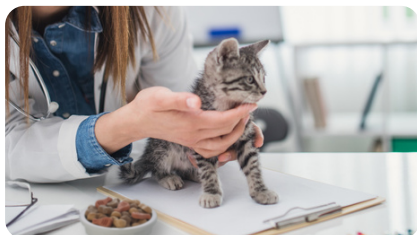
- Repeat each step as necessary, providing treats at every step
- Stop if the cat shows any fear or attempts to escape
- Only progress to the next step if the cat's response is positive (if they keep accepting treats and do not show signs of struggle, fear, or wanting to escape)



## WHAT IF...

### A cat shows touch sensitivity to being handled

Using a touch gradient and slowly increasing level of touch intensity can help measure the cat's acceptance and comfort with changes in touch.



Start with touching at the cat's shoulder, and watch for the cat to accept treats



Progress to slowly gliding your hand down the cat's legs, giving high-value treats



Continue to progress down the legs all the way to the paws, giving high-value treats



Proceed slowly over the rest of the cat's body, continuing giving high-value treats



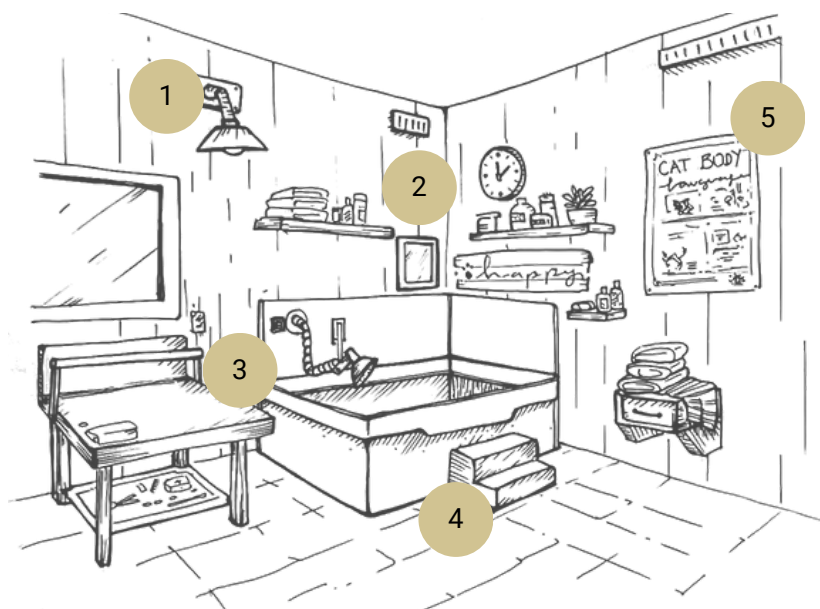
If fear persists, stop, and take a break. Try again later (possibly at another visit)

Assess the cat's body language and only move to the next step if the cat's fear response remains low

- Stop if the cat begins to freeze, struggle, and/or refuse treats. Continuing at this stage would only increase fear.
- Maintain touch gradient level but use caution if the cat starts losing interest in treats and begins fidgeting more (showing escalating fear). Consider moving more slowly, increasing treat values, and/or taking a brief break.
- Continue with increasing touch gradient if the cat happily takes treats and does not show a fear response.

# HANDLING TIPS FOR GROOMING CATS

## IMPROVING THE SALON ENVIRONMENT



1 soft lighting

2 soft wall colours

3 non-slip grooming tables or tubs

4 stairs leading to the tub or table

5 posters of cat body language

### Traffic

- Consider the traffic flow pattern to be sure that cats have the option to avoid coming face-to-face with other animals as they arrive or depart from the salon

### Waiting areas

- If possible, have dogs and cats waiting separately using physical barriers so they can avoid looking directly at another animal
- Ideally, have cats wait in a quieter, calmer space that lacks the sights, sounds, and smells of the grooming room

### Noise levels

- Minimize noise pollution; when possible, have separate areas for waiting, clipping, and blow drying
- Keep the tone of voice calm, soft, and relaxed
- Consider using calming music to help animals feel more relaxed

### Smells

- Avoid overpowering cleaners or smells (cats have a much stronger sense of smell than humans do)

### Time management

- Ensure there is enough time between appointments to avoid long wait times



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