

## 10 Tips for Nail Cutting

*Nail cutting can sometimes feel painful, uncomfortable or distressing for a child – making it stressful for both them and their parent/carer. Below are some suggestions for you to try.*

- 1. Find out what they do not like about it?** Try and find out which aspect of nail cutting your child can't cope with – for some it is the sensation, for others it's the sound of clippers or scissors, and sometimes it's the fear of it hurting.

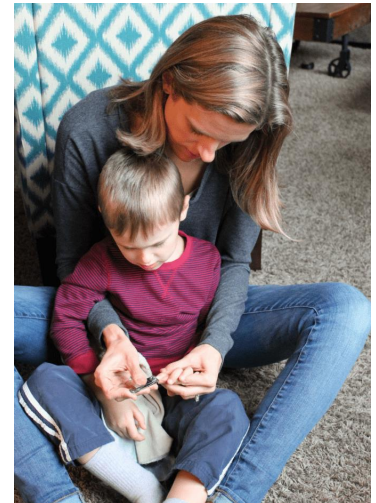


- 2. Choose your time:** try to find a time when your child is relaxed and you are too.

- 3. Remember to be calm and reassuring:** If you are stressed your child will pick up on this.

Note: Remember your child may be frightened of Nail cutting due to a past experience of nail cutting which they didn't find pleasant. Take extra care not to cut too close to the nail bed. Some children can be particularly sensitive close to the nail bed and this can leave an uncomfortable sensation after nail cutting has finished

- 4. Hug or surround them!** Try proprioceptive strategies prior to and during nail cutting, such as hugging or surrounding them which gives some deep pressure (proprioceptive input) or sitting on a beanbag or surrounded by pillows or cushions. Sometimes some extra sensory experiences can help. Holding a vibrating toy, squeezing a stress ball, hugging a stuffed animal.



- 5. Use firm deep pressure** Squeeze the tips of the child's finger or toe just before cutting it, and by doing so, the sensation is greatly reduced. Have your child squeezing your fingers too, taking it in turns to squeeze each other's fingers and turning it into a little game. *For example 'This little piggy went to market song...'*. Massaging your child's fingers and toes, or in some cases their hands and feet, help reduce sensitivity.

- 6. Take the focus off the nail cutting :** play some music, have someone else read a book to them or give them something to play with or watch. Or **Sing!** Using the same short song every time you cut the nails can help as the child can start to predict when the nail cutting is coming to an end. Chose a song that is familiar to the child and that will give you enough time to finish cutting before the song comes to an end.



- 7. Motivator** -Use a motivator or reward such as a favourite toy once cutting is complete e.g. "First cut nails, Then snack"

- 8. Cut their nails in the bath or after the bath/shower:**

Soaking in a bath makes fingernails and toenails become softer, so they are easier to cut.

Note: If you are going to try cutting nails in the bath or when the child is still wet, take into account that they might be slippery, so make sure you are able to hold each finger and toe firmly enough to be able to do it effectively.



- 9. Try using different types of equipment-** Every child is different, but by experimenting with different things, you may find one method that is easier for your child to cope with. E.g. baby nail-clippers, nail curved bladed nail scissors.

- 10. The noise** - Get them used to hearing the noise of nail clippers. Some children find it easier during nail cutting time if there is music playing – not only does it make them feel more relaxed but it can also cut out some of the noise that the clippers make.

