**Bath Veterinary Hospital**

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**The Happy Pedicure**

Well now, who DOESN’T look forward to cutting their dog’s nails? And what dog doesn’t jump up and down with glee whenever their owner gets the nail clippers out? Are you thinking YOU and YOUR DOG, perhaps??? Pedicure time doesn’t have to be a fight to the finish, with both participants left panting and upset with each other. As with most good behaviors, they are easiest to instill at a young age; but there is still hope for the older dog that hates getting a pedicure.

The following method uses food rewards as a means to slowly change your dog’s opinion of getting a pedicure from one of ‘YELP! SCREECH! LET ME GO!!’ to one of

‘Oh, YUM! Bring it on!’ by taking baby steps in handling the feet, with rewards all along

the way.

You will need: teeny food rewards, lots of patience, and about one minute 5 times a day, at least 5 days a week. Oh, and nail clippers…

Go through each step 5 times in a row, 5 times per day. **Do not move on to the next step until you are confident that the dog is comfortable with the step you are currently doing** (relaxed, wagging her tail, eager to see your hand). Don't hesitate to back up a step if you are having problems. It is better to feel that you are going too slowly than to progress too fast.

During all of these exercises, talk to your dog in a conversational, happy tone of voice. If you are tense your dog will be tense – fool the dog into thinking she is having a grand time.

Treats used should be tiny (green pea sized) and **very** tasty – not your dog’s regular food but a bit of cheddar cheese, Pounce cat treat, etc. As you perform each step, pop a tasty treat into your dog’s mouth as you are doing it (eg. touch paw/pop a treat, touch paw/pop at treat – 5 times in a row).

1) Touch paw gently – do this initial step for at least 3 days – do not progress past

this yet – we are looking for her to be eager to have you reach for her paw

2) Pet paw beginning by the wrist and petting down toward the toenails

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3) Leave hand on paw by the wrist for 5 seconds

4) Apply gentle squeeze around the wrist

5) Leave hand on paw on the toe area for 5 seconds

6) Gently squeeze paw around the toes

7) Squeeze and hold, squeeze and hold the paw around the toes

8) Take paw in hand and gently pull paw away from body about 6 inches

9) Pull paw out about 6 inches and pet it while holding (kissing is OK here too)

10) Turn paw in your hand, gently squeeze each toe

11) Show the clippers, let her sniff them

12) Hold clippers near paw

13) Touch paw with clippers

14) Make clipping noises with clippers while holding clippers near the paw

15) Clip ONE nail (not 5 times)… no more than one nail per day

16) Clip two nails, then three nails – you get the idea…