

Please consider all of the following options to declawing:

Scratching Posts

Scratching posts are the main key to successful claw management. Do not just go to the pet store, pick up a post, plop it down in the utility room and wait for the miracle to arise. That won't work. Instead put together a well thought out scratching environment. Cats prefer to scratch on something handy, not two rooms over. Place the scratching post in areas that your cat spends the most time.

- ❖ Vertical posts should be at least 28 inches tall with a sturdy heavy base. The right surface makes all the difference. You need to find a scratching surface that your cat likes best. If he is tearing up the sofa, try to find a similar material to attach to his post. These surfaces tend to be well liked: Sisal, bare wood or tightly woven carpet.
- ❖ Multi-tier cat tree- Not only is it a scratching post, it is a kitty playground. They tend to be a bit pricey but no more than a declaw would and it improves the quality of health for your cat.
- ❖ Cardboard Scratcher- Very cost efficient, you can get them at almost any pet store. Not only that but you can sprinkle a little catnip on them and watch your kitty go town.
- ❖ Homemade Post- The original tree stump, it works as well as ever or the back of a carpet remnant. You can also make your own cardboard scratchers at home.

Slipcovers

This low-tech technique almost always gets overlooked. Cover your furniture so kitty can't scratch it. It's almost too easy.

Clipping Claws

Snipping the last quarter inch of your cat's nail gets rid of the barbed end and **greatly reduces damage to furniture** while still letting your cat be a cat. Kittens warm up to claw trimming fairly easily, while you may have to work at it with your adult cat. You can also delegate this task to a vet or groomer.

Soft Paws

Soft paws are vinyl nail covers that fit over your cat's claws and are attached with an adhesive. They last about 6 weeks and are very easy to remove. They save many cats from being declawed. These can be applied by your veterinarian or a groomer.

Deterrents

This option must be combined with other claw management strategies. Not all deterrents work on every cat. **We recommend Feliway Spray.** It is a synthetic version of a cat's facial pheromones. When sprayed on the furniture daily, it can sooth and comfort your cat. It also encourages your cat to trade one marking behavior (scratching) for another (facial rubbing). Not to mention it is odorless to people!

Play Toys

Don't use your hands as a toy. It only invites getting clawed by your cat. Instead, use toys that let kitty scratch to his heart's content. To discourage bad scratching during play, use this method: stop dead, unhook the claws by pushing the feet forward, never pull away. Do not scream or yell, you will only further excite the cat. Instead, stay calm and silent, ignoring the cat for at least 3 minutes. This will show kitty that because of clawing, playtime abruptly stopped.

Tolerance

A key part to any claw management, one has to be realistic about living with an animal. **Part of being a caretaker for your cat is having tolerance and understanding for innate natural behavior.**

Claw Management DON'TS:

- ❖ Don't force your cat to use a scratcher by placing its paws on them. You might make your kitty more afraid of it.
- ❖ Don't yell, shout, or harshly call your cat by its name. It will only make them more afraid and insure that your cat will never come when called.