

Declawing

Scratching is a normal behavior for cats. Cats scratch to mark territory, to relieve stress, stretch, and to shed the outer covering of the toenails. Providing an alternative scratching surface other than furniture can often curb inappropriate scratching.

There are many types of scratching posts. Most cats prefer a tall vertical post that is high enough for them to entirely stretch out. Kitty condos work well. There are several different materials to cover the post. These generally are carpet or sisal rope. Some cats do prefer a horizontal surface: there are special cardboard pads that work well.

Place the scratching post near the areas of inappropriate scratching. Place catnip or use Feliway (pheromone) on/around the post. Also place an offensive material on the area of inappropriate scratching. Aluminum foil, double sided sticky tape, or a scent such as citrus at the area, but not too close to the post.

Proper nail trimming is essential. This is a simple procedure for most cats and can be easily learned. It gets easier with practice and should be done monthly.

One alternative to declawing is Soft Paws. These are plastic caps that are glued with a non-toxic glue to the nails. The only drawback is that they do need to be replaced periodically and some cats will chew them off. We can apply these in the clinic or show you how to do this at home.

Declawing should be a last resort for problems with scratching.

The reality of declawing is that it is not simply removing the nail, it is actually amputation of the last knuckle of the toe. This procedure should not be taken lightly and will only be performed after consultation about alternatives. Declawing also means your cat needs to remain indoors.



Declawing, continued...

The procedure is done under general anesthesia and is often performed at the time of the spay or neuter. Most cats recover well with no residual problems. Younger cats recover better than older ones. Post-operative care includes a special litter such as shredded newspaper or pellet litter for 2 weeks while the site heals.

Cats will still "scratch" and need after this procedure, as this is a natural behavior. One negative behavior that can occur is an increase in biting as their natural defense of scratching is now gone.

Cat Clinic of NE Seattle
1539 1/2 Northeast 145th St.
Seattle, WA. 98155