



## Cats Scratching Furniture



Does your cat scratch up your furniture? Scratching is a natural cat behavior used by cats to sharpen their claws, stretch their muscles, and mark the area as their

own. Even cats that have been declawed will still go through the motion of scratching. Trying to stop scratching is futile and usually fails. Instead, here's what you can do to redirect it to appropriate scratching areas to save your furniture without the need for surgery.



Even big cats scratch

### Discouraging Scratching

Cats are sensitive to what is under their feet. They have surface preferences and surfaces that they will avoid. Here're some hints for discouraging your cat from using your furniture for scratching.

- Clear packing tape: Use clear packing tape over target areas. The slickness of the tape will discourage many cats from scratching.
- Double sided tape: Cats do not like sticky substances under their paws. Apply to the target areas. Since most of us don't have fur free cats, you will need to change the tape often as it become less sticky with trapped fur.
- Aluminum foil: Cats do not like the feel of scratching on metal. Place the foil on whatever surface you want to protect. This may be the ideal solution if your cat is marking up wooden legs.

- Upside down carpet protectors: Your cats will not want to step on the pointed surface. You can use this at the base of curtains to deter your cat from jumping up on the curtains.



- Rearrange the furniture: If you cat favors one side of the couch but not the other, try to rearrange your furniture so that your cat cannot have access to that area.

- Slipcovers: If you cat loves the surface of your furniture, try a slipcover to change the surface type. Most cats will not scratch plastic slipcovers. Make sure your cat cannot get under the slipcover to scratch.

### Redirecting Scratching

As you discourage scratching in certain areas, you will need to provide your cat with a proper outlet for his scratching. Since cats are so specific about what they like and don't like, you will need to figure out what scratching surfaces your cat prefers. Here're some options to keep in mind when deciding which scratching items work best for your cat.

- Surface position: Some cats like to scratch on vertical surfaces while others prefer horizontal ones. Your cat may like a slanted surface.

- Surface type: There is a large variety of scratching items for a reason. Cats like a variety of surfaces. Offer your cat several surfaces to determine what type they like best. You can choose between soft fabric, harder fabrics, cardboard, carpet, wood, or rope.





- **Scratching height:** Your cat may like the position and type of scratching surface but it may not be high enough. Often, cats that prefer horizontal surfaces need the surface to be high enough so they can fully stretch their whole body. If your cat isn't using the scratching post you

bought, try elevating it or buying a taller one.

- **Location:** Location of the scratching area is very important to your cat. They use this to let everyone know what is theirs. It's usually best to place a scratching post at the area that has already been scratched. If your cat isn't using the new scratching area, try slowly moving it to a new location. Usually your cat will let you know where he wants to scratch.

- **Extras:** Some cats will need just a little extra item to start using the new scratching item. Dangling toys can get their attention. They can either be attached to the scratching item or you can use interactive toys to get you cat to jump on the new item. You can rub catnip on the item to entice your cat to use the new scratching area too. Spray Feliway®, a cat pheromone, on the scratching item to encourage scratching in the desired areas.

### **Other Tips**

Make sure to trim your cat's nails every couple of weeks. This will help reduce their sharpness and the amount of damage they can cause. This also helps protect people from those sharp claws. If you can't clip your cat's nails, we understand. Call us to set up an appointment to have us trim their nails.

There are protective caps you can place over your cat's claws. Soft Paws® are vinyl caps that are glued onto your cat's nails. You simply trim their nails, apply a small drop of glue into the cap, and place it on the nail tip. Hold the cap for a few seconds to allow the glue to dry.

Some cats will try to remove the caps immediately. Make sure to give them treats and toys to distract them. Your cat will soon learn to tolerate the caps. Soft Paws® caps last about 4-6 weeks and come in a variety of colors. Make an appointment for your cat if you need help getting the caps on.



Loving Paws Pet Clinic does not recommend declawing your cat. Declawing is a serious surgery that involves the removal of the last bone of the toe. It's a painful procedure requiring post-operative pain medicine. It is considered a cosmetic surgery because it does not have any health benefits for the cat. Declawing can actually cause some medical issues such as chronic pain, litter box problems, or arthritis.