

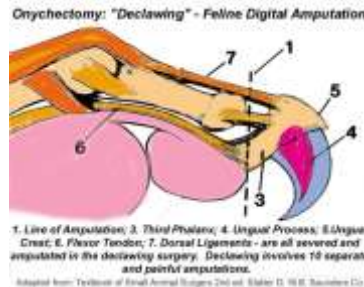


Declawing

Declawing has become a controversial subject. Some people believe it is a cosmetic procedure and is not necessary. Others believe it makes a cat a better pet. Learn about the procedure and other alternatives so you can make the best decision.

Declawing

Declawing is removing a cat's claws. In order to do this, the toe must be amputated at the first joint. This is because the growth center of the nail is located on the bone. This procedure requires anesthesia and several days of strong pain medicine.



Other considerations

Phantom pain: A declawed cat may experience pain for weeks or months as the nerve endings heal. Some cats will experience phantom pain throughout their lives.

Defense: Declawed cats no longer have their main source of defense. This means that if your cat goes outside, they are at major disadvantage in fighting off dogs or other predators. Most can still run up a tree if they have back claws, though not as well as a normal cat.

Litterbox avoidance: Some cats will develop litterbox problems after declawing. As they scratch at the litter, they associate the pain with the litter box and try to avoid it. This leads to inappropriate urination and defecation.

Increased biting behavior: Cats that are declawed often seem more likely to bite. Since they have lost their first level of defense (claws), they tend to bite first instead of last.

Arthritis: Cats naturally walk on their toes. A cat that has been declawed has an altered walk due to removing the toe tips. This slight alteration affects all the joints of the leg and can lead to arthritis as the cat ages. This arthritis can also lead to litter box problems.

Alternative Options

Nail trims: Trimming your cat's nails often will help blunt the edges and protect you and your furniture from scratching. Trim your cat's nails every 3-6 weeks. See our article on nail trimming to learn how. If you can't (or don't want to), we can trim the nails for you.

Nail caps: There are vinyl caps available to glue over your cat's nails. Simply trim the nail, apply a drop of glue into the cap, and apply the cap to the nail. These caps blunt the nail tips and come in variety of colors. You can get them at your local pet store. We would be happy to apply these nail caps if needed.



Scratching deterrents: Clear tape, double sided tape, or foil may deter your cat from scratching on your furniture. See our article on cat scratching for more information.

Behavior modification: Teach your cat not to attack your legs and arms. Provide your cat with other more appealing scratching surfaces. This may require some trial and error to figure out what your cat likes best. See our article on cat scratching for more information.

If you want to have your cat declawed, make sure to find a clinic that offers appropriate pain medicine and treats your cat with care. Loving Paws Pet Clinic does not offer declawing.

Anatomic Changes after Declawing

