

Scratching

Scratching is a normal and necessary cat behavior. Cats need to scratch in order to >Stretch - their shoulders, legs and paws >Scent – there are scent glands in their paw pads and a cat will mark her territory by scratching >Shed the outer layer of their claws – just like a snake's skin, a cat's claws will shed the outer layer Relieve stress – a good scratch helps vent kitty frustrations People, not having the same perspective as cats, tend to get upset when their cat scratches household items such as furniture, carpets, and curtains. The key to preventing unwanted scratching is providing kitty with a better scratching place. Ideal scratchers are: >Sturdy, stable, and will not fall down when the cat leans against it. Tall – to provide the full body stretch that the cat needs Located in a convenient place – near sleeping and eating spots Covered in a good scratching material. This can mean different things to different cats, and some cats may prefer a variety of materials. Some things to try are: >Sisal >Rope >Wood >Cardboard. >To encourage a cat to use the scratchers, rub or spray catnip on it. You can demonstrate with your hands, but don't place her paws on it – many cats are not comfortable with paw handling. Instead, try enticing her by playing with a fishing-pole toy near the post. Trimming the tips of the claws is also a good practice, as it helps the shedding process and reduces scratching damage. Still using the sofa? Here are some things to try: Cover the scratched area with double sided tape, such as Sticky Paws, sold in pet stores.< Cover the scratched area with aluminum foil – not a popular scratching surface< '>Cover the furniture with a blanket, towel or cover and place the scratching post right next to it. After she gets used to the scratching post, you can try removing the cover. Use a cat deterrent on the area. There are several types and brands you can buy from sprays to mats that alarm when the cat jumps on it. >Spritz the cat, not in the face, with water. You should be hidden from the cat's view for this method to work the best. This may not be a good solution because the cat may continue to scratch when you are not around. >Apply plastic covers to each claw. <http://www.softclaws.com/> This will not stop the scratching but your items will not be scratched. >What about declawing? Declawing is never the answer. The operation amputates the first joint of the cat's claw so that the claw cannot grow back. It is a permanent and debilitating surgery. It does not matter if a laser is used or not, it still causes pain and life-long problems. >Tenectomy is another unnecessary and mutilating surgery that severs the paw's tendons keeping the cat from using her claws. PLEASE submit a request for assistance or call a behaviorist if you are even considering either of these procedures. There are humane alternatives available.

Resource:

http://www.catcenter.org/Pages/KnowledgeBase/Documents/17_claws_declawing_scratching/Scratching.ASP