



Information Series

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Why shouldn't I "de-claw" my cat?

What is "de-clawing"?

De-clawing is painful, unnecessary surgery. The vet severs the last joint of each toe while the cat is under anesthesia. As with any surgery, there can be complications. After the surgery, the cat may be plagued with foot problems such as abscesses and nails growing back.

Since the last joint of each toe is removed, the cat's balance will be affected. Can you imagine suddenly living without the last joint of each finger and toe? Can you imagine walking that way?

What happens if I de-claw my cat?

A de-clawed cat has no means of defending herself or escaping from dogs should she accidentally get outdoors. Total responsibility for her safety is now yours.

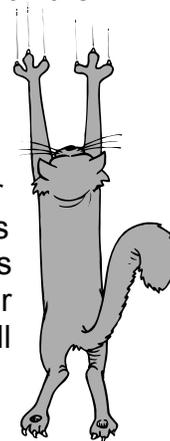
De-clawed cats, realizing they are defenseless, may resort to biting whenever they feel threatened--especially by small children. Cat bites are much more dangerous than scratches. Owners of vicious cats mistakenly believe de-clawing will make them safer to be around, whereas surgery only tends to elevate a cat's insecurity.

What are alternatives to de-clawing?

Try to get a cat or kitten from someone who has raised them with a scratching post. Early training in this area is very important.

For the price of the operation, you can get a pair of nail trimmers and several scratching posts. Because cats sometimes claw just because their nails are too long, you need to trim the nails regularly. Once a week, simply clip off the tip of each nail, just ahead of the darker pink quick.

Buy or make a sturdy carpeted or bark-covered scratching post, tall enough for a grown cat to stretch out full length (30") and/or a corrugated paper post which sits on the floor. Because cats sometimes claw to mark their territory, two or three posts will attract them better than one.



Tip! Rub catnip on the post to make it even more attractive to the cat.

Train the cat to use her posts by rewarding her with a pat when she uses them, and by yelling "NO" at her when she uses the furniture. If your cat continues to scratch where she shouldn't, cover the spots she's using with clear contact paper or drape the furniture with sheets. Also, fill a clean squirt gun or bottle with plain water, and squirt her whenever she claws where she shouldn't. Then put her on her post.

A little work and training on your part will eliminate the need to de-claw your cat, and will make her a better pet. ♥

