



Cat Nail Care



Scratching

Scratching is a natural behavior for cats. Cats scratch to stretch muscles, shed old cuticle, sharpen their claws, and leave scent marks. Even if declawed, cats retain the instinct to scratch. Scratching posts provide cats with an outlet for their instinct to scratch while at the same time, saving your furniture and carpets. In order to choose the right scratching post, consider the following:

What does your cat like to scratch?

Choose a scratching post that has material similar to the material that your cat likes to scratch. Vertical (upright) and horizontal (flat) scratching posts are available in a number of sizes and materials. When choosing a vertical scratching post, make sure it is tall enough so that your cat can stand up and scratch.

Where does your cat scratch?

Cats scratch to leave their scent on objects and define territory. They will often scratch prominent objects near sleeping areas and room entrances. Scratching posts should be located in these and other “public” parts of the house that the whole family uses. Setting up multiple scratching posts provides the cats with an acceptable place to leave their mark without ruining furniture and carpets.

What if my cat won't use the scratching posts?

Place the post near the object you want your cat to stop scratching. Cover the inappropriate objects that your cat finds unappealing like double sided sticky tape, aluminum foil, sheets of sandpaper or a plastic carpet runner with the pointy side up.

Soft Paws

Soft Paws are vinyl nail caps that are glued on to your cats existing nails. They look like a cat's nail, only hollow. Once the nail caps are applied, they remain in place for 4-6 weeks. They will fall off with the natural growth of your cat's nails. Some cats may require a mild sedative in order to apply the soft paws. For more information, you can visit www.softpaws.com.

Nail Trimming

Nail trims are an easy way to reduce damage from scratching. Before trimming your cat's nails, it is important to accustom your cat to having its paws handled and squeezed. You can do this by gently petting the legs and paws while giving your cat a treat. This will help to make it a more pleasant experience. Gradually increase the pressure so that petting becomes gentle squeezing, as you'll need to do this to extend the claw. Continue with the treats until your cat tolerates having her feet handled.

When your cat is ready, apply a small amount of pressure to the cat's paw, with your thumb on top of the paw and your index finger underneath, until a claw is extended. Near the cat's nail bed you should be able to see a pink area, called the "quick", which is a small blood vessel. Don't cut into the pink portion of the nail because it will bleed and be painful for the cat. Cut off just the sharp tip of the claw to dull the claw.

Go slowly with your cat or they may become fearful of having its nails trimmed. To begin with, trim just one foot each day. As your cat becomes accustomed to having its nails clipped you can trim all four feet at the same time.

There are several types of nail trimmers designed especially for cats.