

TO DECLAW OR NOT TO DECLAW?

PROS AND CONS OF DECLAWING

This brochure covers some facts about declawing and alternatives to try BEFORE you ever consider making that vet appointment for a declaw surgery.

CAT CLAW FACTS

- Cats' claws are vital to their anatomy, essential for their ability to balance, their mobility, and their survival.
- The claw is not like our fingernails. It is an extension of a bone, so closely adhered that the entire bone must be removed to take the claw off.
- Declawing is a major surgery with an extensive and painful recovery that can cause or contribute to litter box problems (your cat may stop using her litter box, finding covering her feces too painful on her paws).
- Your cat will have to endure pain every time she has to use her paws (like when jumping, walking and scratching).
- Cats' instincts keep them from showing any pain or disability.
- Cats can become more outwardly aggressive when they feel they are in a disadvantaged or weakened position.
- Declawed cats can never go outdoors because of the danger they face without the protection of their claws.
- Remember that your cat's body is perfectly designed the way it is, just as humans bodies are perfectly designed the way they are. We wouldn't think of amputating one of our limbs for convenience sake. Why consider amputating part of your cat's paws for convenience sake?

DECLAW ALTERNATIVES

1. Have at least one scratching post in your home for your cat(s) to use. The more the merrier! Sisal is a texture that cats commonly like to use. You can also try wood, preferably with the bark. Play with your cat on and around her scratching post. Put catnip on the scratching post. Give her treats and/or praise every time you see her use it. But never force your kitty to use it.
2. You can put Sticky Paws® (found at most pet stores) on your furniture while your cat is still learning that the scratching post is her place to scratch. Sticky Paws® is a double-sided tape. Cats generally don't like to get the claws stuck while they're scratching, so the stickiness of the tape will usually deter them. Tin foil is another alternative to use in place of Sticky Paws®.
3. Soft Paws® are another alternative. Soft Paws® are lightweight vinyl caps that cover the entire claw. Their edges are round and soft so your cat will be unable to damage your furniture when she scratches. The Soft Paws® kit lasts from 4-6 months, and they come in a variety of colors, including clear.
4. Make sure to give your cat(s) plenty of time to learn the new scratching rules in your house! Cats don't like change and are slow to do it. Be patient with them.

There are more alternatives out there to help teach your cat appropriate scratching behavior. Obviously, the earlier you start, the more success you'll have. But even an old cat can learn new scratching habits. Make good habits as fun as possible and positively reinforce them often.

Please try everything you can prior to making the decision to declaw! And please feel free to call BEBHS for more information about declawing and further alternatives.

DECLAWING DEEMED ILLEGAL

The following countries have either outlawed declawing or consider it inhumane and will only allow it under extreme circumstances:

Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Denmark, England, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Northern Ireland, Norway, Portugal, Scotland, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, Wales, Yugoslavia



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