



Inappropriate Scratching

Cats NEED to scratch. It helps them reduce stress, mark their territory, stretch, and remove the dead sheath of their nails. While scratching is a perfectly healthy and normal behaviour for cats, it can become a problem if the cat doesn't have a suitable scratching option, as they will choose an alternative. Common scratching alternatives that cats choose are furniture, walls or carpeting – none of these are ideal, as they may get wrecked from clawing. The good news is that there are things you can do to discourage your cat from scratching these items and encourage them to scratch appropriate things!

- Make sure that your cat has a quality scratching post. It should be at least 3 feet tall, sturdy, and preferably made of a rope-like material called sisal.
- Smaller, cheaper corrugated cardboard scratchers can also be used in addition to the scratching post.
- Place the post where the cat most likes to scratch – for example, if your cat likes to scratch the couch, place the post (and a horizontal cardboard scratcher, until you know which your cat prefers) right beside the couch.
- You can further encourage your cat to use the post by rubbing catnip on it, scratching the post yourself to demonstrate the desired behaviour, and playing with your cat right by the post, as they are more likely to scratch something nearby when they are excited. If they do scratch appropriate objects while you are watching, be sure to offer praise or treats!
- If you are in a multi-cat household, be sure to have enough different scratching options so all the cats can choose their favourite texture and style.
- Do not place your cat's paws on the post, as this will be confusing to them and may deter them from using the post.
- Deter your cat from scratching the inappropriate object(s) by placing double sided tape on the spot the cat likes to scratch. You can also wrap the furniture in a tight-fitting sheet, or a thick plastic shower curtain. Once your cat has begun reliably using the scratching post, you can remove the tape/sheet/shower curtain
- Cut your cat's nails regularly. If you don't know how to cut nails, you can ask your vet to show you, or take your kitty to a groomer
- If all else fails, there are nail caps that you buy at pet supply stores. They adhere with a bit of nail glue, last for about 6 weeks, and prevent damage being done to surfaces. The cats don't mind them, and they even come in fun colours!

Georgian Triangle Humane Society

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