

MEOWCH!

Declawing Kitty? Read This First!

Please take a few minutes to learn about this painful surgical procedure before deciding.

What is declawing?

Declawing is the amputation of each toe bone at the first joint. This is equivalent to a person losing the entire top of every finger at the first knuckle.

- Pain! - The immediate pain after surgery is severe, Chronic pain may last for months, years or for the life of the cat.
- Complications - lameness, abscesses and regrowth of the claw can occur after surgery.
- Joint stiffness – the tendons controlling the toe joints retract and the joints become 'frozen'. The toes can no longer be extended but remain fully contracted for the life of the cat.
- Arthritis – declawing alters the natural way that a cat walks which causes stress on the leg joints and spine, eventually causing pain and joint damage.
- Litterbox problems – declawed cats often associate the pain in their feet while using the litterbox with the actual litterbox itself. Nerve damage in their paws can also make walking on cat litter painful. Many declawed cats end up choosing less painful places to eliminate such as a couch, bed, rug, bathtub, or even piles of clothing.
- Biting – deprived of their claws, a cat may turn to biting to its only other means of defense – its teeth. Studies show that up to 18% of declawed cats either start biting or bite harder and more often.
- Death from surgery – There is always a risk of death from surgical complications such as hemorrhage or infection.
- Death from abandonment – declawed cats that bite or avoid the litterbox are often dumped at shelters where they will be killed because they are not adoptable. Sometimes they are thrown outside to live where they cannot defend themselves and are killed by other animals.

Why do cats scratch things?

- To mark their territory by leaving both a visual mark and a scent (the have scent glands on their paws).
- To stretch their bodies, tone their muscles and flex their feet and claws.
- To remove the dead outer layer of their claws.
- To relieve stress.
- For fun and exercise.

Why do people declaw their cats?

- To protect furniture and property.
- To prevent them from scratching people or other pets
- Their veterinarian recommended it (it's profitable for vets)

Scratching solutions:

- Scratching posts or pads - perhaps sprinkled with catnip
- Training (yes, cats CAN be trained)
- Regular claw trimming
- Nail Caps (SoftPaws, Soft Claws)
- Double-sided furniture safe sticky tape (Sticky Paws)
- Pet repellent sprays
- Pheromones (Feliway)
- Further covers (blankets, towels -anything loose will not be appealing to your cat)