

# CATS NEED TO SCRATCH

## Need More Help?

Find additional resources at  
[pasadenahumane.org/behavior](https://pasadenahumane.org/behavior).

## Scratching Pad Options

There's a reason your cat chooses your couch over the flimsy, short scratching post that's in the corner of a room you never visit. Cats prefer large, sturdy items that are in socially significant areas of the house. Observe your cat's preferences. Do they like to reach up to scratch or prefer to stretch out horizontally? When buying scratch pads, keep the size of your cat in mind. Offering many choices of where, how and which textures to scratch will help curb undesired clawing of your belongings.

- Corrugated cardboard, vertical and horizontal
- Post or tree covered in sisal rope or carpet
- Cubes covered with fabric or nubby sisal
- Large corrugated loungers
- Wall mounted with sisal/carpet inserts

## Encourage & Reinforce Appropriate Scratching

- Hide toys in cat towers.
- Give treats when you notice your cat using appropriate scratching items.
- Sprinkle catnip or silvervine onto scratch pads or towers.

## A Word About Punishment

We know sometimes life with pets can be frustrating. In order to maintain a trusting relationship with your pet, we do not condone the use of spray bottles, noisemakers, or physical punishment. While punishment might work in the moment, the long-term effects from punishment will create worse behavioral problems such as litter box avoidance or fear and aggression towards humans. If you catch your cat doing something you do not like, give them an outlet to express that behavior in a way you find appropriate. Trying to eliminate a natural, essential behavior will only cause frustration for both you and your pet.

- Calmly interrupt the behavior.
- Redirect your cat onto an appropriate scratching pad.
- Encourage and reinforce scratching – think treats!

## Trimming your cat's claws

Cats need their claws! Declawing is inhumane and can lead to painful arthritis and litter-box avoidance. Declawing is the surgical removal of digits including the nail. Trimming your cat's nails is a safe and humane way to protect furniture and humans from sharp cat nails. Here are some websites where you can learn more about how to safely trim your cat's nails at home:

- <https://pasadenahumane.org/how-to-trim-your-cats-nails/>
- <https://fearfreehappyhomes.com/8-steps-fear-free-nail-trims-cat/>

We are always here to help! You can find additional behavior and training resources at [pasadenahumane.org/behavior](https://pasadenahumane.org/behavior).



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