

More Useful Tips!

By providing your cat with a stimulating environment filled with toys and places to climb, you can help to redirect its impulse to scratch. The use of a pheromone vaporizer can also have a calming and anxiety-reducing effect.

Discourage it. If your cat has chosen the sofa or some other piece of furniture, make the item less desirable by covering its edges with plastic, aluminum foil or adhesive tape on both sides until the cat loses interest. Set up the scratching post near this piece of furniture so your cat will head for it when sharpening its claws.



Good to Know!

YES, YOU CAN MINIMIZE THE RISK OF SCRATCHING!

By educating children to recognize and respect a cat's body language, you can reduce the risk that they will be scratched. A cat who growls, hisses, whips its tail or draws its ears back wants to be left alone. Another good strategy is to set up a place in your home where your cat can go so as not to be disturbed.

DOES DECLAWING REDUCE THE RISK OF ABANDONMENT?

In reality, many cats that are declawed are also abandoned. The most common reasons involve aggressive behaviour and cleanliness issues. Moreover, according to a 2002 study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, only 3.3% of cats are abandoned because they destroy furniture or display unwanted behaviour.

The health and wellness of your pet



For more information on declawing or for advice on your pet, talk to your veterinarian.

Contact information



Ordre des
MÉDECINS VÉTÉRIAIRES
du Québec



CAT DECLAWING:

Not anymore



Our role

PROTECTING THE PUBLIC

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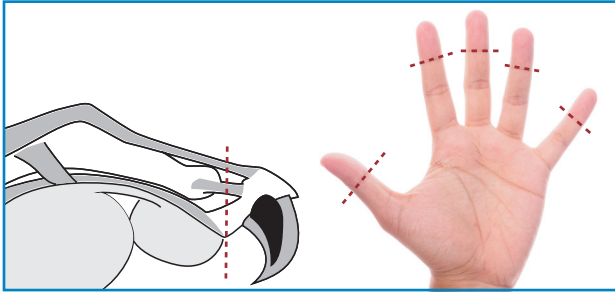
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What is

Declawing?

Declawing, medically known as onychectomy, is a surgical procedure that involves the amputation of the third phalanx of each toe.



Not a Medically Required Procedure

Declawing cats has never been a medically required procedure. It began and then became standard practice only to meet human needs. Today we know that declawing should be avoided.

Any surgery involves the risk of complications, and declawing is no exception. Some studies have suggested that declawing can lead to discomfort, chronic pain and changes in a cat's behaviour and gait. In addition, declawing could lead to a deformity (caused by contracture) of the toes causing pain when walking. This is why the Order of veterinary surgeons of Quebec disapproves of this surgery when not medically required.



Understanding Feline Behaviour

Before adopting a feline companion, it is important to understand its natural behaviour. For instance, cats have a natural impulse to scratch and paw the ground, walls or objects. There are many reasons for this behaviour. They do it to:

- Mark their territory by leaving both a visual mark and a scent; the glands under their paws secrete pheromones;
- Wear down and groom their nails;
- Stretch their muscles and spine;
- Relax.



Three Steps to educate your cat

Living with a cat which still has its claws can require adaptation on the part of the owner. Fortunately, with positive reinforcement and a bit of effort, you can teach your cat to scratch only in designated places. Here are the three steps involved.

1. **Make clipping a regular habit:** Clipping a cat's nails once or twice a month will go a long way toward helping you live peacefully with your cat without having to declaw.



2. **Provide scratching posts.** This will give your cat a natural outlet for its impulse to scratch. To make sure your cat actually uses the scratching post you provide, make sure it is:
 - High enough (about 95 cm) for your cat to stretch its entire body;
 - Placed at the entrance to a room. If your couch is the first object your cat comes across, it might just be where it decides to scratch;
 - Appealing to your cat: add a toy on a rod or a bit of catnip
 - Stable and sturdy to prevent it from falling over.

Nail caps can be a good temporary solution until your cat learns to use the scratching post.

3. **Use rewards:** Giving affection or treats, etc. when your cat scratches at the right place is a great way to encourage more of the correct behaviour. The use of rewards can be a good complement to steps 1 and 2.