



Declawing is a loaded topic. Some people believe it is actually abuse and others wouldn't own a cat *with* claws. Although declawed cats (and partially declawed cats) can lead normal, healthy lives, you should at least TRY to see if you can avoid this costly and painful surgery. Here are some ideas:

1. Practice Kitten Nail Clipping

It is not easy at first, but thankfully, the tiny kitten is not going to start scratching the furniture until later so you have lots of training time. Think of your first 20 efforts as simply training in holding the paw and occasionally try to get a clip in. Then after a while, you will notice that your cat resists less and you can actually clip more and more nails. Believe it or not, it gets easier. Over time, the cat will even perceive the nail clipping positively as a time for pats and treats. Add treats and love to this process instead of force and you will find it gets easier fast!

2. What Type of Post?

Some cats prefer to scratch up doorjambs. Others prefer to scratch up sofas. Different obsessions require different distractions in terms of hardness/material type. These cats are trying to mark their territory, relax their muscles, and shed long claws. They instinctively need to do this and will continue to do it no matter what you do because it is not a choice for them it is a medical necessity. The key is to REDIRECT their desire to scratch onto something that is acceptable to YOU. Your cat does not speak english so you first need to purchase the post (see the following) and then TRAIN your cat to use it. If you dont do both of these things, your cat wont get it.

All types of scratchers appear to like corrugated cardboard, BUT...

My personal cat loves the huge and heavy natural fiber cat scratching post I found online from "Smart Cat." The key is to make the scratching post MORE enticing than the couch. Do this with catnip, Feliway, and by

placing the post (at least temporarily) right next to the thing your cat loves to scratch. (You noticed I didn't say "OR", right? You must do *all* of these things to try to ensure success.) Then make the thing your cat loves to scratch unappealing: tin foil, squirting him with a water gun when he scratches it, etc. Then you combine the two types of training: positive and negative reinforcement. You will succeed! It only took my cat a week to permanently switch to the scratching post, and now he is seeking the post no matter where I put it in the house. He also now recognizes the burping sound of the catnip tupperware and comes running from whatever he is doing straight to the scratching post! We do this silly routine twice a week :)

3. Try a Few Things All at Once:

Whether it's a scratching post, corrugated cardboard or some other "fix," provide *lots* of it. One scratching post in the middle of the living room isn't going to save your couch in the playroom. Remember you need to place the post *strategically*.

Scent-based fixes are not always effective against scratching. Scratching for a cat isn't quite the same as spray-painting the side of the house. It's somewhat more primal than straight vandalism. Even a declawed cat will go through the motions. These motions are relaxing, helping the cat stretch, plus the pressure of the paws leaves behind a scent/mark (to other cats).

Besides, some scent-based approaches can get quite expensive (in the \$30+ range) while JW Gripsoft clippers from [Pet Life](#) cost **only \$5.99!**

A non-scent-based compromise is a physical deterrent like "Soft Paws" (~\$16.99). We put these on all the time at our hospital and find them to be effective, BUT they fall off after a while and need to be replaced. Remember the claws are growing so the caps just grow out. Think of this as a pedicure- temporary.

Ultimately, whatever your approach, the key is damage control. Therefore . . .

4. Accept that some furniture may be ruined!

Hey, you own a cat. What did you expect?

Being offended over the somewhat aerated corner of the expensive couch is rather like scattering priceless nick-knacks in a toddler-infested home and being surprised one broke. If your cat has a favorite corner and nothing else...maybe you could just give it to her? After all, she did not choose to be locked up in a small space all day :)

If all else fails, Call us for a surgical correction appointment 503-395-1649.
Thanks for trying!