



# PAWS<sup>®</sup> CHICAGO

## INAPPROPRIATE SCRATCHING

### CONGRATULATIONS ON ADOPTING YOUR NEW FAMILY MEMBER!

We never want to encourage our cats to scratch things like our furniture, walls, or carpet, but it's important to know that scratching is a completely normal and instinctual feline behavior. Scratching is a way for cats to self-groom, to mark their territories, and to stretch their muscles.

Here's how you can help prevent destructive scratching in the home and encourage productive scratching.

## Prevention

Training your cat to use acceptable scratching surfaces may take some time. During the process, you may need to limit your cat's access to furniture or scratch-prone surfaces. If that is not feasible, there are affordable and easy-to-use products which can temporarily be placed on these items to protect them.



Sticky Paws can be found online and at many pet supply stores. Similar to double-sided tape, many cats dislike the "sticky" feel of the tape and will avoid items covered with it. It is also furniture safe and should not leave a sticky residue.

Temporarily covering items with packing tape is another option to deter your cat from scratching items in the home. Scratching items becomes less attractive for many cats when they are unable to hook and pull fabric with their claws.

### FINDING THE RIGHT SCRATCHER FOR YOUR CAT

Finding the best scratcher for your cat may require experimentation. Every cat is an individual, and what appeals to one cat might not register with another.



**Vertical post**



**Slanted scratcher**



**Horizontal scratcher**

#### Types of Scratchers

Many cats like vertical scratching posts. Make sure the post is tall enough to allow your cat to fully stretch his body and legs. The post should also be stable enough to prevent wobbling.

Some cats prefer slanted or horizontal scratchers. Offer a variety to see what your cat likes best.

## FINDING YOUR CAT'S PREFERRED SCRATCHING SURFACE

Many cats respond well to scratchers made with the following materials: cardboard, wood, sisal, rope, or carpet.



**Cardboard**



**Wood**



**Sisal**



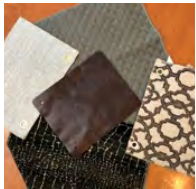
**Rope**



**Carpet**

## Ideas for Finicky Cats

No luck with the above? Look for scratchers made from materials similar to the furniture items your cat tends to favor. This may require some out-of-box thinking, but your cat and your sofa will thank you for it.



Many fabric and upholstery stores offer a variety of affordable or even free samples that can be used to cover traditional scratching posts and mats.



DIY scratching posts or wall-mounted scratchers are affordable, attractive, and easy to make once you find your cat's preferred scratching surface.



Scratching mats can be draped over sofas or wrapped around table or chair legs to prevent the cat from scratching the upholstery or wood.

## Attracting Your Cat to His Scratcher

Once you choose the best scratcher for your cat, how you introduce it and positively reinforce its use are key to success.

Many cats prefer their scratchers placed near their sleeping spots, as well as in areas of the home they view as their territorial boundaries (e.g. windows, doorways, and entryways to different parts of the home).



### Pavlov's Cat

Pavlov's Cat Scratcher has a built-in treat dispenser that rewards your cat with a tasty treat every time he uses the post.



### Toys and Catnip

Use a toy or catnip to attract your cat to an appropriate scratcher. Reward your cat with treats and verbal praise whenever he uses his scratcher.

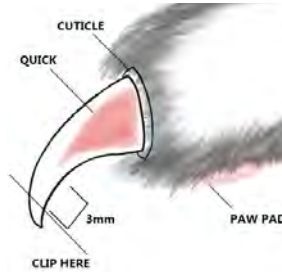
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# Additional Tips

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## NAIL TRIMS

Keeping your cat's nails trimmed regularly can help minimize the damage done to your furniture and other household items. Cutting the "tips" of the nail makes it difficult for the cat to "hook and pull" upholstery and carpet fibers.



Your veterinarian can show you the proper way to trim your cat's nails. Most veterinary clinics will clip your cat's nails for a reasonable fee if you are unable to do so yourself.

## SOFT PAWS



If despite your best efforts, your cat continues to scratch at undesirable surfaces, there is still hope. Many cat owners swear by a product called Soft Paws. Soft Paws are plastic nail covers for your cat. They are easy to apply, and typically need to be replaced every 4-6 weeks. Soft Paws allow your cat to scratch at any surface he chooses without doing damage to your home and furniture. They are a safe and humane alternative to declawing. If you cannot apply them yourself, contact your veterinarian. Many vet clinics will apply Soft Paws to your cat's nails for a reasonable fee.

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*If you are having difficulties managing your cat's scratching in the home, please contact us at [adoptions@pawschicago.org](mailto:adoptions@pawschicago.org) or [emayes@pawschicago.org](mailto:emayes@pawschicago.org). We can direct you to someone who can help.*