

## 6 Simple Alternatives to Declawing Your Cat

1. A tall, sturdy and heavy scratching post sprinkled occasionally with catnip is the favored alternative. Some cats are partial to sisal doormats.
2. When selecting furniture, a closely woven fabric is the best. Cats find this type of fabric difficult to pierce with their claws.
3. When your cat begins to scratch on a piece of furniture, give him a firm warning such as "No!" This should discourage him. If not, you can use a quick squirt from a spray bottle, but try not to get the cat see that it is you that is spraying it (this can make the cat afraid of you). Then call the cat to his scratching post with a food treat, and praise him when he comes and uses the post. This may have to be done over and over until he understands.
4. Until your cat learns that only the scratching posts, (it's recommended that you have several), are for scratching, cover his favorite furniture scratching areas with either one or a combination of aluminum foil, a loosely woven fabric double-sided tape, or blown up balloons taped to the furniture.
5. If accustomed to the procedure cats will tolerate having the curved part of their claws clipped regularly. Consult your veterinarian for instructions.
6. When playing with a kitten or cat NEVER use your hands or arms in play. This teaches him that people are toys and he may scratch simply in play. Each time your cat scratches you, give him a loud, high-pitched "Ouch!" and leave the room. One of the most effective punishments for a cat is being ignored. (NEVER hit or slap your cat. Hitting or slapping your cat can just escalate the scratching and biting play behavior besides, among other things, being harmful to you and your cat's relationship.)

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Remember declawing is radical surgery that involves amputating the first joint of a cat's toes. It's permanent, expensive, and irreversible, and may have an unwanted affect on your cat's behavior. Please consider other alternatives such as Softpaws nail caps or Sticky Paws on furniture before committing your cat to surgery.