

# Scratching

Scratching serves many purposes in cats: sharpening claws, stress relief, marking territory, and more. It would be impossible to stop a cat from scratching, but cats can be trained to use a scratching post or pad.

Some cats prefer to scratch a post; others prefer a horizontal scratching pad; most cats will scratch either. Vertical posts should be tall and sturdy enough for the cat to stretch out and lean against without the post falling over.

Sisal (rope) scratchers are ideal as they are hardwearing; cardboard scratchers are also good as they are cheap and widely available. Carpet-covered scratchers can encourage the cat to scratch carpeting as well as their scratching post.



## **Fingers aren't toys!**

It may be tempting to wiggle your fingers for the kitten to play with, but remember, that little kitten will grow into a big cat, and those tiny teeth and claws will get a lot bigger and more painful! Teach your kitty that toys are for playing with and fingers are for petting and treats.

## **Scratching problems?**

You can stop inappropriate scratching by covering at-risk areas with foil, double-sided tape, or blown-up balloons. Discipline inappropriate scratching with a squirt from a spray water bottle and praise appropriate scratching with attention and treats.

## **Clipping claws**

Keep kitty's claws in check by clipping the tips when they get too long. Most cats will let you trim their claws; many pet stores and vets also offer a claw-trimming service.

## **Declawing**

Declawing is the feline equivalent of removing the upper joint of the fingers (this includes Laser declawing, which is the same brutal operation performed using lasers). The operation frequently results in behavioral changes in the kitty - particularly an increase in biting - and increased stress levels, as well as the possibility of physical deformities and illness from a botched operation. While Maine Coon Adoptions rescues and adopts out declawed cats, adopters must not declaw an intact cat. Please contact MCA if you are having issues with scratching; we are happy to offer help and advice.