

CATS AND KITTENS: Cat Scratching



It's important to remember scratching is an inherent cat behavior. They might be taking the opportunity to sharpen their claws, remove the dead outer layer of their claws, mark their territory, or give their bodies a nice, long stretch. Cats may also scratch when they're feeling frustrated.

Once you are able to understand why your cat is scratching, you can help deter her from ruining furniture. Begin by taking a good look at your cat's current set-up.

SCRATCHING POST

The type of scratching post is important. It should be sturdy, tall enough for your cat to stretch out her entire body, and be covered with the right material. Scratching posts covered in sisal or rope are often preferred by cats. Carpet-covered posts are often ignored because the texture is too soft. Some cats may also be particular about the direction they scratch. Some prefer vertical posts, others horizontal. Giving your cat options may help you figure out what she prefers.

You can help retrain your cat where to scratch by rubbing the post with catnip to help lure her. Or, sometimes the sound of scratching on the post can pique her interest. Scratch your nails on the post and see if she comes running to check it out! Playing with her on or around the scratching post may also entice her. Try dragging a feather wand around the scratching post, over it, and under it to help draw her attention.

Take note of where your cat has been scratching – that's a good area to place a scratching post. Try next to a window or in a common area of your home where you and your family spend a lot of time. Make sure there are enough scratching posts for each of your cats. One of your cats may have marked a post as his own, which could deter your other cat from using it.

OTHER DETERRENTS

A product called Sticky Paws can be placed on the surface your cat has been scratching. This is double-sided tape that can easily be removed from furniture. You might also try tightly covering your sofa with a sheet to deter unwanted scratching.

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