

For January 29th edition

Northwoods Humane Society – Alecia Austin, Shelter Manager

How to Keep Your Cat from Scratching the Furniture

Cats and scratching go hand in paw—it's a natural behavior that helps them stretch, mark their territory, and maintain their claws. But when your feline friend turns your favorite sofa into their personal scratching post, it can become a bit of a problem. Don't worry! With some understanding, patience, and the right tools, you can redirect your cat's scratching habits in no time.

Why Do Cats Scratch? Before addressing the issue, it's important to understand why cats scratch in the first place:

Stretching: Scratching helps cats stretch their bodies and muscles, especially after a nap.

Marking Territory: Cats have scent glands in their paws, and scratching leaves both a visual and a scent mark.

Claw Maintenance: Scratching removes the outer layer of their claws, keeping them sharp and healthy.

Tips to Protect Your Furniture

Provide Plenty of Scratching Alternatives: Cats scratch by instinct, so your goal isn't to stop them but to redirect their behavior.

Scratching Posts: Choose sturdy posts covered in sisal rope, carpet, or cardboard. Place them in areas your cat frequents, like near their favorite nap spots or by the furniture they're targeting.

Scratching Pads: Flat or angled pads can appeal to cats that prefer horizontal scratching.

Cat Trees or Condos: These provide multiple levels for scratching, climbing, and lounging.

Experiment with different materials and styles to find what your cat loves most.

Make Furniture Less Appealing

If your cat insists on scratching the couch, make it less enticing by:

Using Double-Sided Tape: Cats dislike the sticky texture, which discourages them from scratching.

Covering the Area: Use furniture protectors, slipcovers, or aluminum foil to temporarily shield the spots they target.

Using a Deterrent Spray: Pet-safe sprays with scents cats dislike can keep them away.

Encourage Scratching on Approved Items

Once you've provided scratching alternatives, make them irresistible:

Place Them Strategically: Position scratching posts near the furniture they've been scratching. Gradually move the posts to more convenient locations over time.

Use Catnip: Sprinkle or rub catnip on the scratching post to attract your cat.

Reward Good Behavior: Praise and treat your cat when they use their scratching post. Positive reinforcement helps them associate the post with good things.

Maintain Their Claws

Regular nail trims can reduce the need for excessive scratching. Use a cat-specific nail clipper, and trim just the sharp tips of their claws every few weeks. If you're unsure how to do this, ask

your vet or a groomer for guidance.

Redirect, Don't Punish

If you catch your cat scratching the furniture, gently redirect them to an approved scratching surface. Never yell or punish them, as this can create fear and confusion. Instead, use a toy or treat to guide them to the scratching post.

Create a Happy, Stimulating Environment

Cats sometimes scratch out of boredom or stress. Ensure your feline friend has plenty of toys, hiding spots, and interactive playtime to keep them mentally and physically stimulated.

What About Declawing?

Declawing is not a humane solution. It's a painful surgical procedure that involves amputating the last joint of a cat's toes. This can lead to long-term physical and behavioral issues. Providing proper scratching alternatives and training is a much kinder and effective way to manage scratching behavior.

Patience is Key

Remember, training takes time. Be consistent, offer plenty of alternatives, and reward your cat for positive behavior. With patience and understanding, your cat will learn where it's okay to scratch, and your furniture will thank you!

Dates to Save March 7, 20, May 3, 17, May 1 Bingo at Powell's on Round Lake – 5:30 pm

April 27 – Spay-ghetti and No Balls – Vet Center 5 pm

June 7 – Raise the Woof – Eagles Cover Band – Park Center – 7:30 pm