

# FELINE SCRATCHING BEHAVIOR

## WHY DO CATS SCRATCH?

To remove dead outer layer of claws

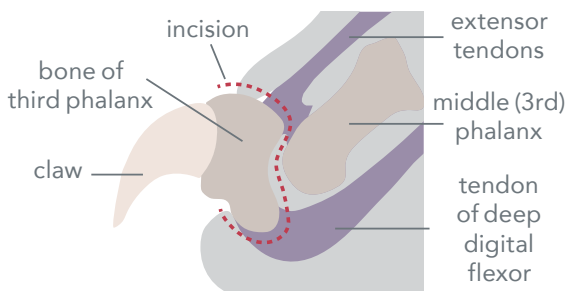
To mark their territory

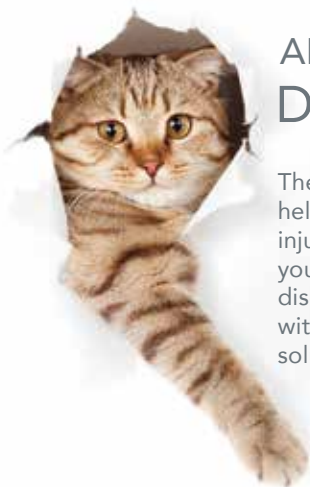
To stretch their muscles and flex

To express their excitement or happiness

Scratching is a normal, instinctive feline behavior. It's an important means of visual and smell communication. Declawing is an elective procedure. This procedure entails amputation of a third "toe bone", phalanx. Unlike human nails, feline claws are attached to the last bone in their toes. West Loop Veterinary Care does not perform elective declaw surgery unless medically indicated. The procedure can result in the following consequences:

- Short and long term pain
- Hemorrhage
- Swelling
- Infection
- Nerve trauma
- Behavioral issues





## ALTERNATIVES TO DECLAWING

There are many good ways to help prevent scratching injuries or damage around your home. We are happy to discuss these considerations with you to find the best solution for you and your cat.



**Suitable scratchers:** Scratching posts, scratching pads, cardboard boxes, and clean lumber or logs.

**Claw care and regular trimming:** Regular nail trims can prevent injury or damage to the household. If you need assistance, our team is available for this service!

**Temporary synthetic nail caps:** These temporary caps are glued over the nails to help prevent damage or human injury.

**Environmental changes:** Repetitive scratching behaviors may be related to anxiety, stress, attention seeking, or a change in perceived security within the environment.

**Pheromone sprays or diffusers:** Release an odorless copy of the facial pheromone which helps cats feel more comfortable and less stressed.

**Speak with your veterinarian:** Increased scratching behavior may be indicative of an underlying medical issue. Your veterinarian may suggest additional alternatives for curbing increased scratching behavior.

We're proud to be a  
Cat Friendly Practice!  
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