

Knowing what it Really Means



The 
Paw 
Project

Paws to consider...

Declawing is amputation – not a fancy manicure.

Declawing Defined

Declawing is the amputation of cats' toe bones. It is not just a special manicure that can only be done by a veterinarian. The veterinarian must amputate each toe bone from which the claw grows in order to remove the claw. Declawing is one of the most painful surgeries performed by veterinarians, and yet it does not provide any benefit whatsoever for the cat. Declawing is cruel and is outlawed or considered unethical practice (*mutilation*) in many parts of the world.



Declawing and Chronic Pain

Cats who have been declawed may have pain in the remaining portion of their toes. Digging in the litter box can be so painful that they stop using the box altogether. They may have difficulty jumping or even walking. Many resort to biting because they are no longer able to defend themselves with their claws.

Declawing and Behavior

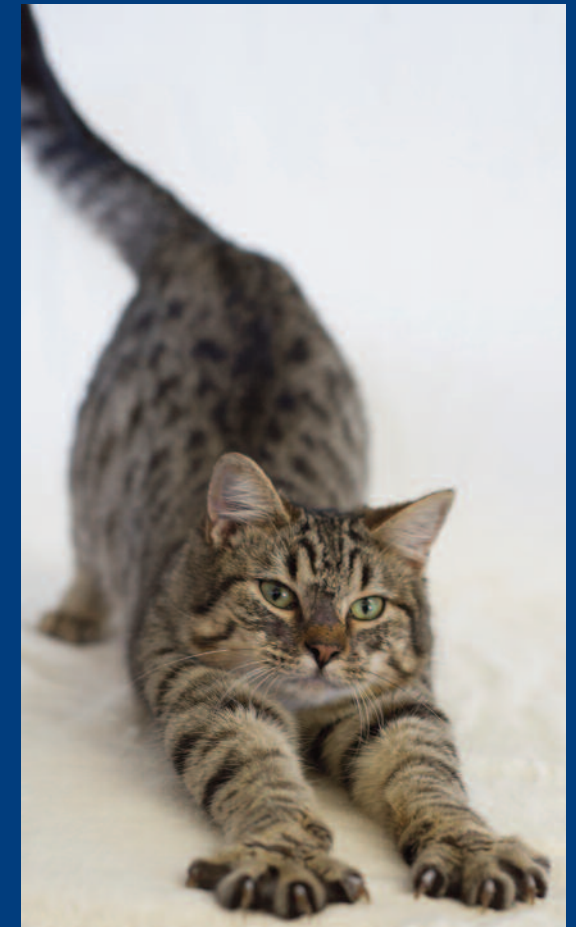
Declawing does not guarantee a cat will be allowed to stay in its home. Declawed cats may be more likely to be abandoned or relinquished to a shelter because of the problems in behavior known to be caused by declawing. Problems include avoiding the litter box and increased aggression (biting).

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Sharing your Life and Home



The facts about declawing.

Cats are Special

Cats are special animals. They are loving and sensitive. Sharing your home with a cat is one of the best things you can do. You will love your new best friend and your new best friend will love you.



About Claws

Claws are an important part of what makes a cat, a cat. Cats use their claws to climb, exercise, balance and protect themselves. Spreading their toes and claws when they stretch is a sign that cats feel good. It is normal behavior for cats to scratch and a way for them to mark their territories both visually and with scent.



Proper Claw Care

Most cats have 10 toes on their front paws and 8 in back. Cat claws grow from within their toe bones, unlike human fingernails, which grow from skin. With a little patience and training, clipping claws can be easy, especially if you combine clipping with a reward, such as a treat. Cut only the tip of the sharp claw to avoid pain and bleeding from the pink quick. Groomers and vets can trim your cat's claws, too.

Good Scratching

Cats have individual preferences as to what surfaces they prefer to scratch. If your cats like to scratch on wood, a wooden scratching post is appropriate; if they like carpet, provide a carpet or sisal covered scratching surface. Corrugated cardboard is another preferred surface. Scratchers may be oriented according to cat preferences too. Some like them upright, flat, or angled. Scratchers must be placed in central areas of the living space and must be sturdy enough not to tip.

Human Health and Claws

Declawed cats are known to bite more often and harder than clawed cats, therefore declawing does not make cats safer for young, elderly, or immunocompromised people. The CDC, the Canadian Medical Association, and other human health care authorities recognize that fact and advise against declawing cats to protect human health. People in the many countries where declawing is not performed are able to live with clawed cats without problems.