



WHY DO CATS SCRATCH?

Scratching is a natural behavior for cats. Understanding why and where your cat likes to scratch can help keep harmony in your home.

Cats scratch to communicate, to condition their claws, and to stretch.

SCRATCHING POSTS

COMMUNICATION

This is both a visual and scent (from the pads of their feet) marker to other cats. Your cat will want to renew this marker regularly. Familiar smells are comforting to your cat and let them know they belong.

CLAW CONDITIONING/DEFENCE

As your cats claws grow they need shedding and trimming. Scratching allows the old outer layer of claw to shed and exposes to the new, sharper claw beneath.

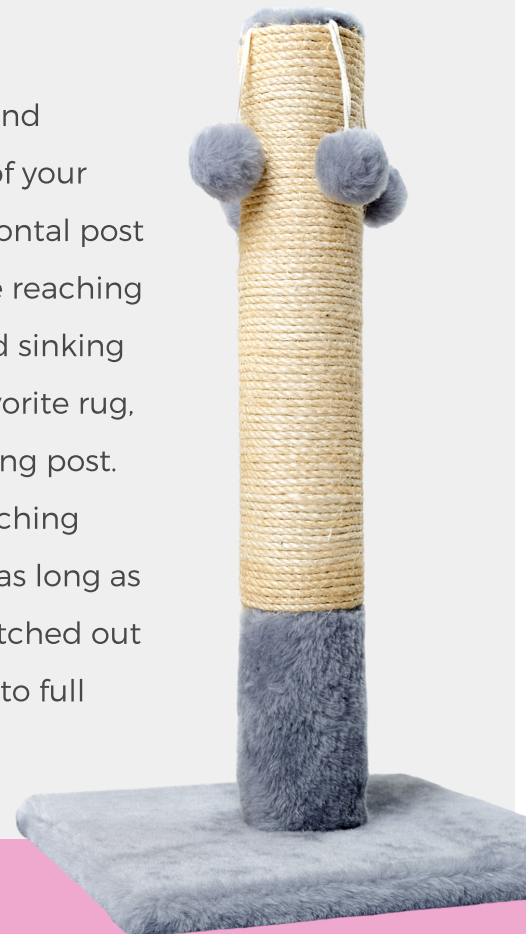
STRETCHING/BALANCE

By first anchoring themselves with their claws your cat will then stretch back. Just like with humans, stretching feels good for your cat. They are stretching their paw, back and leg muscles.

To reduce unwanted scratching in your home you should have two or three scratching posts. Choose posts with a texture your cat can sink their claws into, such as, carpet, sisal rope or corrugated cardboard. Some cats like a piece of wood, similar to scratching a tree outside. Your cat will either, reach up or out in front of them, to scratch.

If your cat is reaching and stretching up the arm of your chair to scratch, a horizontal post may be best. If they are reaching out in front of them and sinking their claws into your favorite rug, try a horizontal scratching post.

In either case the scratching post should be at least as long as your cat when fully stretched out and sturdy enough not to fall over or move around.



SCRATCHING POSTS

Place the posts in prominent locations, such as near doors or the arm of your favorite chair. A scratching post near your cat's favorite nap spot is a great location. Who doesn't like a nice stretch when they first wake up!?

Many cats will scratch by the door when you first come home. They are likely excited to see you and need a way to release that energy and excitement. Place a scratching post in this area! Use treats or catnip around your scratching post to encourage using the post. Once you determine what your cat likes try not to make changes too often.

If you are really uncomfortable with your cat's claw use consider a product such as **"Soft Paws"**. Soft Paws come in many colors. They are a rubber cover that goes over your cat's nail to protect your furniture.

They can be purchased and even applied at most veterinary clinics and usually last 2 – 3 months.

Do Not punish your cat for scratching the furniture. Squirt bottles, spanking or scruffing can lead to a fearful or aggressive cat and will not stop the behavior. You can manage, redirect and reward the behavior you want. If your cat is scratching the furniture try using double sided sticky tape to make scratching that location unpleasant for them. You can also try covering the area with aluminum foil or spraying with a light lemon scent.

You don't have to break the bank on scratching posts.

A quick google search will bring up lots of great DIY cat scratching post projects.

Above all, remember, if you are going to tell your cat "No", you must also provide an appropriate solution. Scratching is a healthy and natural behavior. **For every no, there must also be a yes!**



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