

Stopping a Cat from Scratching the Carpet

Many cat owner's homes bear the tell tale signs that their cat loves to scratch. Oddly placed furniture (likely covering carpet that has been shredded) and throw blankets tossed here and there on nearly every piece of furniture in the living room (probably to hide the spots where the cat mistakenly used the sofa for a scratching post) are a dead giveaway.

While some cat owners have resigned themselves to the belief that such destruction of property is just part of cat ownership, others have sought ways to put an end to the destruction.

While it is not cheap, replacing a piece of furniture is a whole lot easier than replacing a room of carpet. But there is something about carpet that many cats find simply irresistible. As they saunter from room to room, each step reminds them that, right below their feet, is an endless supply of scratching delight.

It must be terribly hard to resist because most cats don't bother even trying to resist and instead, pick a spot or two and let the destruction begin. Some cat owners focus on trying to get a cat to stop scratching completely, but that is never going to happen. Scratching is natural and necessary to a cat, so trying to stop the behavior altogether is a waste of time.

Instead, try to get your cat to scratch in appropriate locations, such as on his scratching post.

Why Do Cats Scratch?

There are four main reasons that cats scratch.

1. Keep Claws Sharp

It is important that a cat keeps his claws sharp and healthy. This is one of the functions of scratching.

2. Mark Territory

Cat's feet have scent glands that, thankfully, humans cannot smell. Those scent glands, which are left behind wherever a cat scratches, let other cats know who has been there.

This explains why cats will nap on their favorite spot on the sofa and then, before hopping down, give the spot a good scratching. The cat is just letting everyone know, "hey, this is my spot."

3. Release Energy

Scratching is a form of mild exercise for cats and it helps them relax as well as burning off excess energy.

4. It's Fun

Scratching just feels good to cats. If you don't believe it, just notice that often when your cat is scratching, he is purring at the same time.

Now that you know why cats scratch, it should be clear why trying to "train" them to stop scratching is not a good idea. Instead you need to give them a place to scratch that is acceptable to both you and your cat. Doing this will help to stop your cat from scratching the carpet.

The Perfect Scratching Post

For most cats, not just any scratching post will do. There are many areas to consider when shopping for the perfect scratching post.

1. Texture

While your cat might enjoy scratching your carpet, that is actually not the best material for scratching. The reason is that, as mentioned above, one of the reasons cats need to scratch is to keep their claws sharp. That is why a rough surface, such as sisal or cardboard are best. That is not to rule out carpet covered scratching posts completely as most cats do love that texture. Just be sure to also provide a rougher surface as well.

2. Size

The size depends on many things, including how much available space you have in your home. Just keep in mind that your cat should be able to fully extend her body while scratching. As long as the post is long or tall enough to accommodate that fully body stretch, it will work.

3. Stability

What do you think would happen if, the first time your cat tried to use the scratching post, it fell over and scared the jeepers out of her? Of course, the answer is that she'd never go within ten feet of that scratching post again. That is why it is important to be sure that the scratching post is very stable before trying to introduce your cat to it.

Another thing to consider is that it is a good idea to have scratching posts in every room in which your cat spends a lot of time. It's fine to have one where he sleeps, but if the cat is napping in the living room, the carpet will look just as appealing as the scratching post. By keeping one in every room, there is a better chance that he will use the post and leave the carpet and furniture alone.

What About Having My Cat Declawed?

Declawing is as acceptable an idea as cutting your fingers off at the second knuckle. Don't do it. Some people think that declawing a cat is similar to trimming a person's nails. This is not the case. Claws are not just tails, but rather they are an important part of the cat's anatomy.

A declawed cat will have issues with balance and mobility. Also, many cats that have been declawed suffer behavioral and emotional problems as well.

Declawing a cat is cruel and it is not necessary. It should be completely removed as an option.

Getting your cat to stop scratching the carpet will take some time and patience. But once your cat adjusts to taking out his scratching urges on his scratching posts, your carpet and furniture will once again be safe and he'll have a perfect spot on which to scratch to his heart's content.