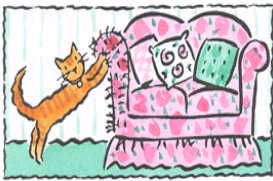




Destructive Scratching

Scratching is a necessary and natural behavior for cats. When their territory is limited to the indoors they transfer this behavior to furniture, carpet, drapes, and walls.

Why They Do It



Cats scratch for various reasons:

- * To mark their territory (as they scratch they release pheromones from their foot pads scent marking that area, as well as leaving a visual mark.)
- * In play.
- * While stretching and for exercise.
- * To relieve anxiety.
- * To remove exterior nail layers, that are frayed and worn.
- * They scratch because it feels good.

What to Do

Because scratching is a normal behavior, and one that cats are highly motivated to display, it's unrealistic to try to prevent them from scratching. Instead, the goal in resolving scratching problems is to redirect the scratching onto acceptable objects. Provide your cat with a variety of scratching posts - carpeting, wood, rope, upholstery, cardboard, etc. Some cats prefer vertical posts others prefer horizontal, and some favor slanted.

Some cats will only scratch pile carpeting while some prefer sisal. The post should be large enough for your cat to stretch fully. When you determine your cats preferences provide additional scratching posts in various locations. All cats should have a sturdy post that won't shift or collapse.



- Encourage your cat to investigate the scratching posts by scenting them with catnip or placing a treat on them. Place them in areas where your cat will be inclined to use them. Give praise when you see him using the scratching post.

- Discourage inappropriate scratching by removing or covering desirable objects. Turn speakers to the wall. Use double-sided tape on furniture. Vinyl carpet runners (turned upside down to expose the knobby side) could be placed over carpet.

- Trim your cat's nail regularly.
- Consider using soft nail caps (sold at many pet stores). These caps attach to the cats nails with adhesive so when she scratches no damage is done. These nail covers are temporary usually lasting 4 to 6 weeks.

What Not To Do

- Do not try to force your cat to use the scratching post. This may frighten her and force your cat to avoid the post completely.
- Do not allow your cat to scratch old furniture as she will transfer this behavior to new pieces.
- Do not throw away your cat's old scratching post. It may be unsightly but cats prefer shredded and torn objects. They can really get their claws into the fabric and it is infiltrated with their scent.
- **Never** physically reprimand your cat for scratching inappropriately.