

Why Declawing Is Not A Good Choice

The act of declawing your cat or kitten by surgically having its claws removed is not only physically harmful to your cat, but emotionally harmful as well. One of the first things you should know is that de-clawing is pretty much an American-only thing. Most other countries consider this act to be inhumane, and some countries such as England, Scotland, Wales, Italy, France, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Norway, Sweden, Netherlands, Northern Ireland and Ireland, Denmark, Finland, Slovenia, Portugal, Belgium, Brazil, Australia, New Zealand, Yugoslavia and Japan all consider de-clawing to be considered extremely inhumane and therefore have made the practice illegal.

Why inhumane? Your cat's claw is not a toenail. It is actually closely adhered to the bone. So closely adhered that to remove the claw, the last bone of your the cat's claw has to be removed. Declawing is actually an amputation of the last joint of your cat's "toes". When the end digit, including the claw is removed, the sensory and motor nerves are cut, damaged and destroyed. They do not repair themselves or grow back for many months. Following the surgery there is a wooden lack of feeling, then a tingling sensation during the long convalescence while the cat must walk on the stub end of the second digit.

The surgery has a reputation for causing pain for a week or more and the possibility of postoperative complications, such as infection, hemorrhage, nail regrowth and altered feeling in the toes for some time after surgery. There is disagreement as to whether declawing leads to behavioral problems in cats. There is concern for the welfare of cats who can not defend themselves or climb to safety if they are able to go outside. A declawed cat will still scratch but without damage to furnishings.

People choose to have their cats declawed for many various reasons, the main reason being the protection of their furniture, others being that they don't want to try to train the cat, they tried one or two things to train the cat but it didn't work, to stop the cat from scratching them, they have always had declawed cats, their veterinarian recommends it or simply because they just do not know any better.

I'm going to take a moment to get very personal on the furniture thing. If you are offended - good! I hope it will make some people think for a moment. So you adopt/buy/acquire a kitty. You bring it into the house, and you don't wish for it to destroy your precious curtains or furniture. You take it to the vet and have it declawed so there is no chance of that happening again. Now let's change the wording of that...only slightly. So you adopt/make/acquire a child. You bring it into your home and it grows to a toddler, and you don't wish for it to knock over grandma Gina's antique vase or to get messy ketchup fingers on your couch. You take it to the doctor/surgeon and have his/her fingers removed. Yes, it really is the same thing. Especially when you do research and take a look at the medical diagrams of how cat's paws are actually constructed.

Declawing is a very permanent solution to a petty problem of your own. It isn't the cat's problem, it's your own problem, yet it is the cat who has to pay the piper. I would bet you a box of Friskies that if you asked the cat what the solution should be, they would suggest furniture covers. However, a cat CAN be easily trained not to claw furniture, and for those especially stubborn kitties, you can also purchase protective nail caps...they just push on over the tip of a cat's claws and keep the cats claws from doing damage.

I do realize that no matter what argument I write, some people always will declaw their cats. Whether they should actually own a cat at all is a subject for another day. However, please do remember that education is always the best weapon (or as G.I. Joe would say..."Knowledge is half the battle!"), and educate as many people as you can about the truth of declawing a cat.

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About the Author

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