

SCRATCHING

All cats have an inbuilt need to scratch, it helps to provide exercise through stretching and provides visual and scent markers that help a cat feel comfortable in his environment, it helps them to maintain their claws (which are essential to their movement and well being and should be retained).



The most effective way to stop your cat from scratching your furniture and other belongings is to give her something to scratch that meets his behavioural needs for scratching in the same way the 'off-limit' items do.

Provide textures that your cat prefers (loosely woven materials, knobby textures, natural wood). Attach them into scratching posts, most cats prefer vertical surfaces to scratch, but you will find the occasional one who prefers horizontal surfaces.

Provide multiple scratching posts in strategic locations i.e. near an off limit item like the couch, entrances to rooms etc.

Make it difficult to access off limit items by placing objects in front of them. A well placed pot plant can inhibit access to a favourite couch.

Provide plenty of toys and make sure your cat can engage with them. Two types of toys are important;

- A) Toys that provide mental stimulation like treat balls or food parcels (place a few pieces of dry food in a cardboard toilet paper tube and fold the ends up) become intrinsically challenging and engrossing for your cat.
- B) Other toys that provide social and physical entertainment like the feather on a string or a fishing rod type toys. These toys allow you to build up your bond with your cat, and help use up his daily energy requirements.

There is no point making a fuss if you come home and find some damage, as the cat will not understand your unpredictable behaviour. If you find your cat in the act of scratching inappropriately, redirect them onto a toy or entice them away from the forbidden object.

Picking them up and placing them on the scratching post may be intimidating for a lot of cats, and if they are already highly stimulated you may end up being swiped, so it is best avoided.



Your relationship with your cat is vital to ensuring a stress free life for both of you, so try to understand things from your cat's point of view and you may find you will begin to feel less frustrated and more sympathetic to their plight. Believe it or not, once you feel calmer, your cat will feel calmer too, and this will help reduce their stress level and avoid many inappropriate behaviours.

