declawing facts

Recent research into declawing has given us a lot of new information. Here’s why we want our cats to keep their claws!

Declawing is not just the removal of a cat’s claws. Declawing is an amputation of the third phalanx (bone) of each toe. That’s 10 painful amputations in a front declawing (20 in a 4-paw declawing).

- there is no health benefit to the cat from declawing
- 50% of declawed cats develop acute physical complications and 20% develop long-term physical complications
- declawed cats must re-learn walking (as would a human who lost their toes) and may develop painful arthritis and tendon constriction
- declawed cats will need x-rays to monitor tissue regrowth inside the paw pad
- declawed cats may need pain management medications for life
- 33% of declawed cats develop at least one behavioral problem after their declaw surgery, such as biting or litter box issues
- litter box issues are 2x more common in declawed cats
- declawed cats are more likely to bite than cats with their claws and more likely to become repeat biters

Here’s what some other animal professionals and even lawmakers have to say about declawing:

- the British Veterinary Association calls it an “unnecessary mutilation”
- the American Association of Feline Practitioners strongly opposes declawing
- declawing is illegal in 37 countries and 8 US cities

why claws?

- scratching is a territorial marker for cats: If a cat can’t scratch, it will find other ways to mark its territory, such as going outside its litter box.
- claws are a first line of defense: getting scratched by a cat is far less harmful than being bitten!
- scratching is cat yoga: Cats use scratching to stretch out their bodies and de-stress themselves.

alternatives to declawing

- **Nail trims:** Most groomers and veterinarian clinics can offer trims, but you can easily DIY with many cats! Cats can be conditioned to accept nail trims at home.
- **Nail caps:** Most groomers and veterinarian clinics can put them on. You might even be able to DIY!
- **Scratching posts** throughout the home! Remember, cats need to mark their territory, do their de-stressing yoga, and be able to take care of themselves.