



# 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.