

Alternatives

Trim your cat's nails

When the nails are trimmed properly, they do less damage to furniture and skin. Many Vet Clinics offer low-cost nail trimming. We offer a handout with instructions on how to trim nails.

Soft Paws

Soft Paws are a vinyl nail covering that has been very successful for many cats and their owners. They can be applied at your Veterinarian's office the first time so that you can learn how to do it. Soft Paws are a painless option for your cat.

Train to use scratching poles

Cats are smart. They can be trained to use appropriate surfaces for their scratching. A sisal rope scratch pole, rubbed with some catnip, is a positive enticement for any cat. Demonstrate for your cat how to scratch and praise profusely when he uses the pole. Redirect your cat to the pole when he starts to use another surface. We offer a handout on this subject.

10 Reasons Not to Declaw

Declawing is a painful surgery.

Declawing does NOT benefit the cat.

Declawing robs a cat of natural defenses.

Declawing may lead to litter box problems.

Declawing may lead to aggression problems.

Declawing creates a life of stress for the cat.

Cats need their claws to move properly.

Declawing can create long-term health issues.

Declawing may change your cat's personality forever!

There are alternatives!

Handouts

We offer the following handouts free of charge:

How to Introduce Your New Cat to Other Cats

How to Cat-Proof Your Home

How to Prevent Litterbox Problems

How to Manage Your Cat's Claws

How to Trim Your Cat's Claws

The Truth About DECLAWING

Congratulations on being a cat owner. Cats are wonderful companions who deserve the very best care.

Halfway Home Pet Rescue believes the practice of Declawing is an extreme and cruel solution to problems dealing with a cat's claws.

We offer this information to educate and provide alternatives so that your cat will live a happy, pain-free life.



Adoption Facility

489 Main Street, Caribou ME 04736

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Cat's Claws

The cat's claw is not a nail as is a human fingernail, it is part of the last bone (distal phalanx) in the cat's toe.

Unlike most mammals who walk on the soles of the paws or feet, cats are digitigrade, which means they walk on their toes. Their back, shoulder, paw and leg joints, muscles, tendons, ligaments and nerves are naturally designed to support and distribute the cat's weight across its toes as it walks, runs and climbs. A cat's claws are used for balance, for exercising, and for stretching the muscles in their legs, back, shoulders, and paws. They stretch these muscles by digging their claws into a surface and pulling back against their own clawhold - similar to isometric exercising for humans. This is the only way a cat can exercise, stretch and tone the muscles of its back and shoulders. The toes help the foot meet the ground at a precise angle to keep the leg, shoulder and back muscles and joints in proper alignment.



Declawing Surgery

Contrary to most people's understanding, declawing consists of amputating not just the claws, but the whole phalanx (up to the joint), including bones, ligaments, and tendons! To remove the claw, the bone, nerve, joint capsule, collateral ligaments, and the extensor and flexor tendons must all be amputated. Thus declawing is not a "simple", single surgery but 10 separate, painful amputations of the third phalanx up to the last joint of each toe. A graphic comparison in human terms would be the cutting off of a person's finger at the last joint of each finger.



Declawing is not without complication. The rate of complication is relatively high compared with other so-called routine procedures. Complications of this amputation can be excruciating pain, damage to the radial nerve, hemorrhage, bone chips that prevent healing, painful regrowth of deformed claw inside of the paw which is not visible to the eye, and chronic back and joint pain as shoulder, leg and back muscles weaken.

Consequences

Some cats are so shocked by declawing that their personalities change. Cats who were lively and friendly have become withdrawn and introverted after being declawed. Others, deprived of their primary means of defense, become nervous, fearful, and/or aggressive, often resorting to their only remaining means of defense, their teeth. In some cases, when declawed cats use the litterbox after surgery, their feet are so tender they associate their new pain with the box...permanently, resulting in a life-long aversion to using the litter box. Other declawed cats that can no longer mark with their claws, they mark with urine instead resulting in inappropriate elimination problems, which in many cases, results in relinquishment of the cats to shelters and ultimately euthanasia. Many of the cats surrendered to shelters are surrendered because of behavioral problems which developed **after** the cats were declawed. The constant state of stress caused by a feeling of defenselessness may make some declawed cats more prone to disease. Stress leads to a myriad of physical and psychological disorders including suppression of the immune system, cystitis and irritable bowel syndrome (IBS).