

## Facts on Declawing

Using their claws is necessary and normal behavior for cats, in both a social and protective manner. Cats will use their claws to mark their territory, exercise, relieve boredom and stress, and to keep their nails healthy. Many years ago, it was considered part of the normal cat-care routine to declaw, but research and behavioral study has proven this inaccurate. Today, declawing cats is illegal in many countries, and in the United States specifically, declawing is banned in an increasing number of cities and states.

- ***Declawing is not a simple procedure. It is an intrusive and extremely painful event requiring the equivalent of cutting off a human finger to the first knuckle.*** The pain is experienced both immediately following the surgery, and throughout the cat's life as the result of "phantom pain", which is common in human amputees.
- ***Declawing cats often leads to negative behavior such as litter box problems and biting.*** When a declawed cat uses the litter box, the litter can cause pain in the amputated digit, and the cat will attempt to avoid the pain by not using the litter box. Additionally, if a cat is not able to "warn" others that he is displeased via a gentle scratch, he may bite instead.
- ***Declawing cats destroys their first primary defense mechanism.*** If a cat were to get lost or escape, that cat would not be able to defend itself, climb for protection, or kill prey for survival due to the absence of the claws.
- ***There is no medical or behavioral benefit to declawing.*** Instead, declawing has proven to cause excruciating pain and may lead to the above negative behaviors, which can then lead to cat relinquishment and/or abandonment.

There are alternative methods you can employ rather than declawing:

- Scratching posts and scratching toys offer cats appropriate items where they can scratch, offering many in different areas will give cats many opportunities to use these items rather than furniture.
- Nail caps are plastic coverings glued on a cat's nails to make the nails softer while not compromising the integrity of the nail.
- Nail trimmers perform the same function as nail clippers for humans and used regularly offer an excellent management of nail health.
- Toys and enriching interaction will provide cats behavioral and physical stimulation, the absence of which can lead to negative clawing behaviors.

- Check out [www.pawproject.org](http://www.pawproject.org) – a non -profit dedicated to ending the cruel and unnecessary practice of feline declawing.



# Declawing Facts



KNOW THE TRUTH



**Declawing = amputation of cat's toe at first joint**  
(like cutting off a human's first knuckle)

**33%** of cats suffer at least one behavioral problem after declaw surgery

**Illegal in 37 Countries**  
+ 8 U.S. Cities

**18%** show increased biting

**17%** suffer wounds re-opening

**15%** will not use the litterbox

**11%** suffer from lameness

**10%** see nail regrowth

**Declawing can produce:**  
Chronic pain  
Arthritis/lameness  
Nerve/tissue damage  
Gangrene  
Abscesses  
Paw pad atrophy  
Bone regrowth

**up to 50%** of declawed cats develop acute physical complications

**up to 20%** of declawed cats develop long-term physical complications

**"The pain must be excruciating; it is certainly a gruesome spectacle to watch."**  
—A Vet Tech

**75-90%** of pet owners change their mind about declawing once they know the risks

**"Claws are a physically, socially, and emotionally vital part of every cat."**  
—Jackson Galaxy, Cat Behaviorist

**"Unlike routine recoveries... declawing surgery results in cats bouncing off the walls of the recovery cage because of excruciating pain..."**  
—Dr. Nicholas Dodman, DVM

**Litterbox issues are 2x more common in declawed cats**

**Osteomyelitis affects 30% of declawed cats (a painful bone infection)**

**You wouldn't declaw a dog... you trim his nails**

**Please don't declaw me!**

**Sources:**  
JAVMA (Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association), AVMA.org, Veterinary Medicine, DVM Best Practices, James Gaynor, DVM, Colorado State University Veterinary Medical School, pawproject.org, pet360.com, littlebigcat.com, Vet Forum, paw-rescue.org, moggies.co.uk, declaw.liuviolat.com, maxxhouse.com, World Small Animal Veterinary Association, jacksongalaxy.com