

CAT SCRATCHING



**Aurora
Animal
Shelter**

Scratching is a natural behavior for cats. Cats scratch for many reasons including; removing the dead outer layer of their claws, marking their territory, burning off energy, stretching out, expressing annoyance, or simply sharpening their claws. If your cat is scratching areas of the home that you prefer them not to, there are precautions you can take to curb this behavior.

PREVENTING INAPPROPRIATE SCRATCHING:

- Provide multiple sturdy scratching posts throughout your home. (sisal and/or rope lined scratching posts are preferred by cats)
- If you have a multi-cat household, ensure there is at least one scratching post per cat. Sometimes, cats will mark posts as theirs and other cats are not permitted to use it.
- Provide a different variety of scratching posts so they have different options; vertical, horizontal, long, short, etc.
- Try various texture of scratchers to see if they have a preference.
Sisal and/or rope lined scratching posts are preferred by cats.
- Place a scratching post in front of the spots that your cat scratches inappropriately. This will teach your cat to scratch on appropriate items only.
- Clip the sharp end of your cat's nails once a week or once every other week to keep their nails as dull and short as possible.
- Place nail caps on your cat's claws. These must be replaced every 4-6 weeks.

NOTE: Declawing your cat is strongly discouraged in order to address inappropriate scratching behaviors. Scratching is a natural behavior and instinct for cats. If they do not have the ability to express this natural behavior, it can result in behavior problems. In addition, declawing your cat can result in inappropriate litter box habits and/or medical issues.

TIP! Do NOT use punishment to eliminate inappropriate scratching behavior. Not only will this hinder your relationship with your cat, it can make the problem worse. Punishment will not resolve the behavior because you are not teaching your cat where they should scratch. If punishment techniques are used, your cat will simply learn to scratch in inappropriate areas when you are not around.

