



SCRATCHING POST CHECKLIST

<input type="radio"/> Orientation	<p>Most cats like to scratch vertically on a sturdy post that is taller than their body length, to fully stretch and give a good scratch.</p> <p>If your cat is scratching your carpet, try a horizontal scratcher on the floor.</p> <p>Cat trees/condos are popular with most cats - and they usually include scratching posts.</p> <p>There are other types of scratchers, such as those that hang from the wall or are built into toys; these are less often used.</p> <p>Experts say that more is better when it comes to scratching options.</p> <p>Studies show it's also good to have a number of different types of scratching posts to account for cats' different preferences.</p> <p>Companion Animal Psychology reported that cats nine-years-old or younger preferred a cat tree/condo, but older cats wanted a scratching post.</p>
<input type="radio"/> Texture	<p>Sisal is the most common material used for scratching posts. Cats can easily dig their claws into sisal and get an effective scratch.</p> <p>Some cats prefer corrugated cardboard, carpet, cloth, or wood.</p> <p>Carpet-covered posts are too soft to meet the needs of most cats, and cats can get their claws caught in the loops.</p> <p>If your cat is scratching doorways, try a scratching post of plain wood.</p>
<input type="radio"/> Size	<p>According to Companion Animal Psychology, cats are less likely to scratch inappropriately if they have a tall post that is more than three feet high.</p>
<input type="radio"/> Location	<p>A good rule of thumb is to provide a wide variety of scratching posts in a wide variety of locations.</p> <p>Place posts where cats want them, such as next to their favorite eating and sleeping spots, so they won't have to go far to scratch.</p>



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OTHER SCRATCHING STRATEGIES

<input type="radio"/> Trim Claws	<p>Make trimming your cat’s claws a normal part of your cat-grooming routine, in the same way cutting your fingernails and toenails is part of your grooming routine.</p> <p>Sedentary cats may not wear down their claws through exercise, and their nails can become overgrown without regular trimming.</p> <p>Untrimmed claws can grow into your cat’s paw pads, which can lead to infection, pain, and difficulty walking or using the litter box.</p>
<input type="radio"/> Reinforce	<p>Studies show that when cats are rewarded for using a scratching post, they’re significantly less likely to scratch inappropriately.</p> <p>Good rewards include food/treats, petting, and praise.</p>
<input type="radio"/> Deter	<p>Companion Animal Psychology reported that people who used deterrents saw no improvement in their cat’s scratching habits, and yet deterrents remain popular.</p> <p>A number of items can be used to make a scratching surface unappealing, such as two-sided sticky tape, tinfoil, plastic, rubber mats, or furniture covers. Some of these, such as tinfoil and plastic, could be hazardous to your cat if swallowed and therefore should be avoided.</p> <p>You could use a spray, such as citrus, that masks your cat’s scent on things you don’t want your cat to scratch.</p> <p>Another option is to block your cat’s access to surfaces you don’t want scratched, such as by placing a blanket over furniture or by placing a heavy object in front of a doorway or windowsill.</p> <p>Whatever deterrent you use, remember to also place a scratching post near the area to give your cat an alternative surface to scratch.</p>
<input type="radio"/> Distract	<p>To distract, clap your hands or shout when your cat starts to inappropriately scratch. Other options are noise-makers or motion-activated devices.</p>
<input type="radio"/> Redirect	<p>To redirect, throw a treat or toy in the direction of an acceptable scratcher.</p>
<input type="radio"/> De-Stress	<p>Feline pheromone spray mimics the feline facial pheromone, and makes cats feel calmer and less likely to inappropriately scratch.</p>
<input type="radio"/> Claw Caps	<p>Claw caps are applied to your cat’s claws much like artificial nails are applied to your fingernails.</p> <p>The caps are shed automatically as the claw grows, so you will have to replace them every 3 to 4 weeks.</p> <p>Soft Paws is the most well-known brand of claw caps.</p>

Disclaimer: This checklist is intended to serve only as a starting point. A cat with inappropriate behavior should always see a vet for a health check. If your cat receives a clean bill of health, please consider contacting a cat behavior consultant. Many behavior modification techniques have detrimental effects if misapplied. A qualified professional will take a complete behavior history, develop an intervention plan customized for your cat, and guide you through its implementation.

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