



Our Best Friends:
The cat declawing controversy

Description

The Montreal SPCA asks veterinarians to ban declawing

By **Vanessa Rose**

*This is the third in a series of articles on pet care called **Our Best Friends**, written by **Vanessa Rose**, founder and owner of [Les Anges Gardiennes](#) pet care services. Vanessa trained as a Veterinary Technician and has over 16 years of experience in providing professional pet care.*

If your cat has gotten into the habit of constantly scratching up your belongings, it is essential that you look into understanding why your cat does this. Your first and last option should be to never have your cat declawed. While this process might be legal, it is incredibly inhumane and causes more damage than it fixes.

Many people have mistaken “declawing” for a quick fix to all of their problems. Declawing, however, is a process in which the distal phalanges (the end bones of the cat’s toes) are amputated. The human equivalent would be to have the tips of your fingers amputated!

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Cats need their claws to stretch, scratch, grasp, climb or defend themselves. Your feline friend does not intend to damage your furniture nor does this out of behavioural issues. In fact, it is simply in your cat’s nature to scratch. In fact, kittens will start scratching as early as eight weeks old, which is the perfect time to introduce them to a scratching post.

Cats scratch for a variety of reasons:

- To mark their territory
- To stretch
- To maintain health
- It feels great for them!



Image: Tamba Budiarsana from Pexels

In addition to being inhumane, declawing a cat can cause an entire set of subsequent problems. Declawing can lead to aggression, long-term pain and discomfort, misuse of the litter box and biting because a declawed cat is more likely to bite when playing or trying to defend itself, which ultimately replaces a clawing problem with a biting problem. Because of this, many veterinarians have stopped offering the service altogether. In fact, as many as 30 countries have banned the practice, making it illegal and Montreal is trying to join their ranks.

'Declawing is a process in which the distal phalanges are amputated. The human equivalent would be to have the tips of your fingers amputated!'

On Tuesday, April 2, 2019, the Montreal SPCA started an online petition to appeal to the Quebec Order of Veterinarians to ban the practice of claw removal. As of today (late April 2019), the petition has collected more than 29,000 signatures, nearly reaching its goal of 35,000 signatures in the span of two days.

Visit spca.com/en/declawing to add your name!

Now in all seriousness, if you are having issues with your cat scratching, it is important for you to find methods of helping your cat. The ideal solution is one that benefits both of you. It is also important to understand that your cat is not going to stop scratching. It's in his nature and it's one of the few inconveniences that come with having a cat at home.



However, there are nurturing steps you can take for your own good and that of your cat, and to save your furniture:

- Invest in a scratching post.
- Purchase more toys made of material suitable for scratching for your cat to interact with.
- Make your furniture very uncomfortable for your cat to scratch for seven days or until he uses the scratching post instead. You can use double-sided tape, citrus spray, aluminum foil or plastic wrap to discourage your cat from scratching your furniture.
- Use catnip to get your cat to adopt the scratching post. A light spray will draw your cat towards the scratching post rather than your couch very effectively.

Remember, there are always ways to work with your cat. Declawing should never be an option. There are so many other ways to promote a healthy, happy lifestyle for your feline companion without compromising their precious claws.

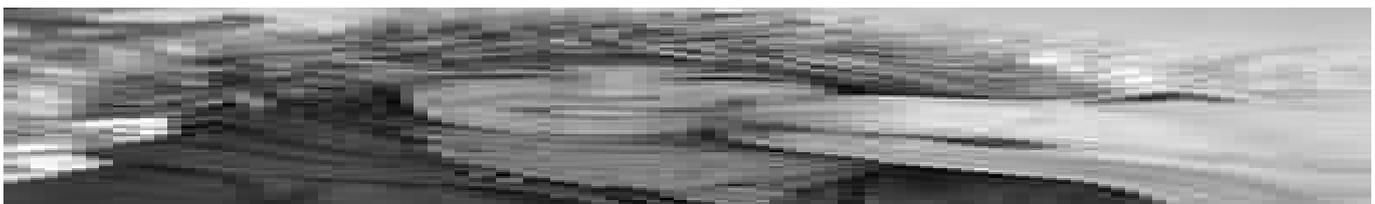
Keep them safe, keep them happy, and keep those cats purring!

Feature image: Kevin Bidwell from Pexels

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Vanessa Rose is the founder and owner of [Les Anges Gardiennes](#) pet care which offers a variety of services “to keep your pets safe, comfortable and loved”.



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