

## **Why We Discourage Declawing**

We are opposed to the procedure of declawing cats because of our basic commitment to the protection of all cats. Having a cat declawed is a procedure that could be very traumatic for your pet. We ask that you familiarize yourself with all the facts and possibilities concerning this procedure and that all the choices be well-informed. Should you decide against declawing, but are still concerned for your furniture; our shelter staff is available to coach you through behavioral retraining. This alternative requires only a scratching post, time, patience, and love.

Declawing is a painful surgical procedure.

- Declawing is a surgical procedure and carries all of the risks normally associated with surgery.
- Declawing requires anesthesia that involves the removal of the claw and up to the first bone in each toe.
- Declawing is not always done in a sterile environment, and infection is possible.
- Death from anesthesia is also possible.
- After surgery, cats are often very uncomfortable for at least a week - and, unfortunately, it is very difficult to provide pain relief as most common analgesics are poisonous to cats.
- After recovery, the cat will have to learn to walk again on the stubs of the remaining bones in its toes. A guillotine-type surgical procedure or overlooked bone fragments could cause scar formation on the toes. If this occurs, the nails may grow back under the skin. These nails grow haphazardly, usually into the paw, and cause intense pain. Another surgical procedure is then required to correct this problem.

### ***Declawing can lead to behavioral problems.***

- Aside from the physical aspects, declawing is known to cause behavioral changes and even psychological damage. Some cats have become so frenzied at their loss that they have had to be euthanized.

- A cat that has always been gentle may resort to biting in an instinctive attempt to alleviate the loss of their primary defense.
- A cat that has been declawed will often have difficulty adjusting to the change. The older the cat is at the time of the procedure, the more difficult the adjustment.
- Scratching and clawing is a normal behavior for cats. It is an instinctive marking procedure, as well as being part of a grooming routine. Scratching occurs during play and is associated with stretching upon awakening. Kneading during interaction with people is an indication of excitement or contentment.

***Declawing jeopardizes a cat's safety.***

- The safety of a declawed cat may also be jeopardized. A cat without claws is basically defenseless. All cats should live indoors; a declawed cat **MUST** live indoors, as its ability to fend for itself, or to defend itself against another animal has been restricted.
- The cat's ability to run and climb can also be affected.