

Scratching the Surface

Understanding this basic behavior can salvage your furniture and save your relationship with your cat.

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Try placing double-sided sticky tape on the scratched object. Cats hate the sensation of something sticking to their paws. Tape can work in some locations, but it might damage your furniture.

4. Change the PostWhen the scratching post begins to wear, don't just throw it out and set a new one in its place; a torn-up post is a neon sign in cat language.

"When it looks ugly because it is all shredded, that is what the cat wants," Dodman said. When you get ready to replace a post, set the new one next to the old one until both are being used.

"All species have fundamental behavioral needs, and claw-marking in cats is one of these," Shepherdson said. "If you do not provide an animal with the opportunity to engage in its fundamental behavioral needs, then this would be a strong argument that the animal is suffering as a consequence."

Sitting on your couch or purring on your lap is a creature whose behavior is still firmly rooted in the wild. Instead of fighting your cat's wild heritage, revel in its desire to express it. Learn to appreciate that this creature loves you and trusts you enough to live with you. You can show your gratitude and affection by recognizing and understanding your cat's need to be a cat. A cat might easily say, "I claw, therefore I am."

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