

## Selecting a Scratching Post

**A feline behavior expert offers advice on finding the proper scratching post for your cat.**

*Pam Johnson-Bennett*

Q. What should I look for when selecting a scratching post? What are the most popular scratching surfaces?

Feline behaviorist Pam Johnson-Bennett, author of *Think Like a Cat*, says:

From a cat's point of view, the ideal scratching post is tall, sturdy and covered in a rough texture. Sisal is just about the best covering for a scratching post. The rough texture is what encourages cats to dig their claws in. You also want to make sure the post is tall enough so the cat can get a full stretch when reaching up to scratch. The post that worked for your cat when he was a kitten may not be tall enough when he is an adult.

And, if the post is going to be tall enough, it also must have a sturdy base. The last thing a cat wants is a wobbly post in danger of toppling over when he puts his weight against it.

The carpet-covered posts that you find everywhere in the pet stores are not adequate. When you choose a carpet-covered post you often end up with a cat who chooses another option such as the sofa.

You can find sisal-covered posts in many pet supply stores as well as online. There are two companies that make outstanding scratching posts. My absolute favorite is TopCat Products and you can buy their posts at their website. The other company is called Smart Cat. Both companies make sisal-covered posts that are sturdy, tall and will last a long time.

Another great option is to get a cat tree. These are great because they serve double duty. The posts are great for scratching and the perches are great for napping. A cat tree also enables more than one cat to share one space. When looking for a cat tree, choose one that has support posts that are covered in sisal or bare wood.

Finally, corrugated cardboard scratching pads are loved by most cats and they are inexpensive. These scratching pads allow for horizontal scratching needs because not all cats like to vertically scratch. The pads are also so inexpensive that you can place several in various rooms in your home. There are even some incline pads for those cats who like a combination of horizontal and vertical scratching. These pads are easily found in pet supply stores.

Best,  
Pam Johnson-Bennett, CABC  
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