

## Preferred Scratching Surfaces

**Do cats prefer certain scratching surfaces over others? A feline behaviorist explains.**

*Pam Johnson-Bennett*

Q. Are there materials cats don't care for or won't claw? I am going to purchase new furniture and would like to have more info in this area before selecting upholstery fabric.

Feline behaviorist Pam Johnson-Bennett, author of *Think Like a Cat*, says: Before buying new furniture, you should work on training your cat to an appropriate scratching post. Scratching is a natural behavior so instead of trying to find a fabric that your cat won't like, it would be easier to invest in a couple of good scratching posts. Look for a post that is covered in a rough material such as sisal. Make sure the post is tall and sturdy so your cat can get a full stretch. Two companies that make terrific posts are TopCat Products and Smart Cat. The posts are so well made.

Once you have the post, place it near the area where your cat currently scratches - for example, if your cat scratches the couch, put the post right next to the couch and then cover the scratched area of the couch with Sticky Paws. This is a double-sided sticky tape made especially for this purpose. This way, your cat will see that the couch is no longer attractive but WOW, what a great alternative!

You can also get some corrugated cardboard scratching pads to place in various locations around the house or if your cat also prefers horizontal scratching.

Once your cat is comfortable with the post and routinely using it, then you can go ahead and start shopping for new furniture.

Best,  
Pam Johnson-Bennett, CABC  
IAABC-Certified Animal Behavior Consultant

- More Expert Advice -