

## How do I keep my cat from scratching my furniture?

**CatChannel expert Jeanne Adlon, professional cat sitter, explains how to establish claw-free zones.**

*By Jeanne Adlon*

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Q: How do I keep my cat from scratching my furniture?

A: Scratching and climbing are two things cats love. The good news for cat owners who want to save their furniture is that there are some things that can encourage your cat to consider claw-free zones.

If you are bringing a new cat or kitten home, invest in a durable scratching post (no shorter than 3 feet tall). I recommend carpeted "tree houses" that are 4 to 5 feet tall if you have the room. This way, your cat gets to scratch and climb. With a new cat, have your scratching post or tree house ready and show them how much fun it is to play with, rather than the new couch. Catnip is a great motivator, so have a fresh supply on hand. Put a good dose of catnip on the scratching post, and refresh it weekly, to keep your cat interested. When your cat does the right thing, give lots of praise.

Like brushing, make sure that nail clipping becomes a regular part of your interaction with your cat. I suggest clipping every two weeks. Cats generally don't like to have their paws touched, but if you start early by gently massaging your cat's paws several times a week, she will get used to having you handle them.

If your current cat just can't keep his claws off your favorite chairs, you might try putting double-sided adhesive tape on his target areas. Cats do not like the sensation of the tape. You also can check with your pet store for sticky strips which are used for this purpose. Several different companies make them. If all else fails, try lightly squirting your cat with water from a plant mister when he misbehaves, but do it undercover. You don't want your cat to blame you for getting wet!

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