

# **The Definitive Guide to Saving Your Couch from Your Cat**

## **Compliments of Cats International**

This is not “rocket science” and yet I am continually surprised by the number of feline behaviorists that have successfully kept kitty from urinating on the carpet, from biting the house guests, and cruising the countertops but when it comes to saving the couch, they go blank. On the contrary, the behavior consultants at Cats International consider this to be the easiest behavior problem to solve.

Think about it... If you had just gotten a new puppy and the puppy was digging up your expensive landscaping, would your first thought be to have your puppy's toes surgically removed? I expect that you would naturally and intelligently opt to engage in a training program.

Elective mutilation, also referred to as “declawing” is never the answer. While some cat owners feel that they are solving the scratching problem with surgery, later they may discover that this choice may have pre-disposed their cat to avoiding the litter box, as well other problems such as shyness and biting problems. Take away one form of defense (the paw swipe) and the cat will use its teeth. This is just common sense.

Now some people don't realize that cats are just as easily trained as dogs. The truth is that you may have already done an excellent job training your cat to scratch the couch.

Does this sound familiar?

Kitty starts tearing at the couch or your favorite chair...

You and other family members run from all parts of the house to chase kitty away from the scratching target. From kitty's standpoint, this event rates high as an ego-booster (one little scratch and the family is at his feet!) Now, if the family chooses to yell and chase the cat around the house, this game is now elevated to High Priority!

Now, time for the reconnaissance mission...or how to undo the damage we've done.

- Let's start with an understanding that scratching serves many useful and healthy purposes for cats.
- Cats need to stretch and exercise and condition their nails
- Every cat household should have at least two cat-appealing scratching posts in high-traffic areas.
- The post should be at least 32" high
- It should be sturdy and unable to be tipped
- Sisal material or rope are the preferred scratching materials (don't use carpeting!)
- Place the post in front of the problem area
- Praise the cat every time he uses the post (positive reinforcement—works!)
- Our favorite post is the Ultimate Scratching Post made by [www.esmartcat.com](http://www.esmartcat.com)

Now we all know that cats are very territorial animals and marking is an important occupation for cats. In order to feel secure in their home territory, they routinely patrol the area and mark it by rubbing or scratching. The scratching post offers an excellent outlet for this natural behavior.

Now the cat is in love with the post. You may have rubbed some catnip on the sisal post or perhaps you just scratched the post with your fingernails to entice kitty. Don't think for a moment that he hasn't forgotten his old haunts and he may be interested in re-visiting the old areas. (After all, he worked hard to mark them!).

This is our opportunity to prove that we can be just as clever as cats. We have a rather unfair advantage, however, as there are now a multitude of very effective deterrents to help us. When kitty checks out an old spot or a brand new one, we can go to our arsenal of deterrents. The best part is that there is no yelling or running around and it works when you are sleeping or out of the house.

### **These are our “Secret Weapons”**

#### Feliway Spray

If sprayed in problem areas on a regular basis, it will give the cat the impression that the area is already marked—no need to scratch. Can be purchased At The Feed Bag Pet Supply.

#### Sticky Paws

This clear, double-sided tape is inexpensive and can be applied to almost any surface. Cats dislike anything sticking to their paws. Can be found at The Feed Bag Pet Supply.

#### SSSCAT

This motion detector hisses when the cat approaches the problem area. Even the most fearless of cats clear the area when it activates. This product can be purchased at The Feed Bag Pet Supply.

#### Vinyl carpet runner

If the back-side of the vinyl carpet runner has a very prickly feel, it can be cut and placed in the area that you want your cat to avoid.

#### Solid Air Fresheners

Cats dislike perfume. An air freshener may keep the cat away from an area until it has evaporated. (Never put it near the litter box or a feeding area). Scented dryer sheets may have the same effect.

Now that we have given you all our secrets of success, please share them with others.

No cat should have to experience the pain and permanent mutilation that is the result of the declawing procedure.

Cats International has never failed to solve an inappropriate scratching problem. Now you can do it too!