

Getting the RIGHT Scratching Posts

Cats scratch furniture for a number of reasons. Scratching is a good form of exercise for them. They get to **stretch** out their bodies and extend and retract their nails. When they scratch, the movements help **remove the outer nail sheaths**. Cats also scratch to **leave visual and olfactory (scent) markers**. Their interdigital glands, which are located between the pads of their paws, leave odors behind so that other cats know that the “marker” cat has been in the area. When cats scratch objects, they also leave small gouges, which are visual signals to other cats that there is a cat in the area.

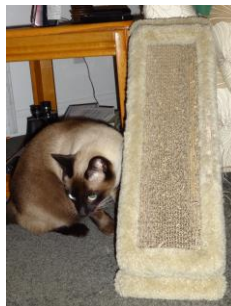
Some cats also may scratch furniture because they are not provided with adequate scratching posts. Other cats have developed a preference for particular materials, such as the expensive fabrics that our couches and armchairs are made from! The location of certain furniture may make it a great place for cats to provide a visual signal or get a good scratch in after waking from a nap. In the wild, scratching sites are usually located in areas where the cats spend a fair portion of their time.

What to Do?

1. Place a scratching post right next to the furniture the cat is currently scratching.
2. Deter the cat from scratching furniture by placing double-sided sticky tape on it. Many cats find the stickiness of the tape unpleasant.
3. Praise and offer food rewards whenever your cat scratches her scratching post. You can use clicker training to capture the cat as she is engaging in appropriate scratching behavior to teach her to scratch on the preferred objects.
4. Offer a variety of scratching substrates; **don't offer just one** carpeted scratching post. For example, also offer one of the inexpensive cardboard scratching posts or one made from sisal rope. You need to make sure all scratching posts are secure, so it can't tip over and injure your cat. Cats love to scratch when they wake up in the morning/when they wake up from a nap...place scratching posts close to their sleeping locations so it's “convenient.”



Tall (yes, that kitten is going to grow-buy once!) Multiple materials (carpet, sisal, cardboard), multiple levels to jump to and get away from dogs. STURDY-so it won't tip over.(NOTE: Photo bomber cat is not included)



GETTING THE RIGHT SCRATCHING POSTS

(Yes, the more you have the better)

Getting the Right Scratching Post

Cats are individuals, and different cats prefer different kinds of scratching posts. You may need to experiment with several types of scratching post until you find the one that your cat likes best.

Stability

Find a scratching post that is as stable as any heavy furniture and as immovable as wall-to-wall carpeting. Scratching puts a lot of pressure on the scratched object, and if it's not sturdy enough it will probably wobble or even topple over.

Size

When your cat scratches the post, she is also performing a full body stretch. The scratching surface should be at least 28-30 inches long. The longer, the better.

Angle

Some cats prefer vertical scratching posts while others go for horizontal or slanted ones. You may have to experiment with the various kinds until you find out what your cat likes best.

Texture

Different cats have different preferences. Sisal, rope and carpets are usually welcome. Some cats prefer cardboard or rough fabrics. Experiment to discover your cat's particular taste.

Location

Place the post in a prominent area of your house, clearly visible to your cat. Consider the situations when your cat scratches and place suitable scratching posts nearby. You may need more than one scratching post to cover all locations, especially if you live in a large house.