**Why Scratching is Good for Your Cat (and How to Protect Your Furniture!)**

Scratching is a natural and healthy behavior for cats. It helps them stretch, mark their territory, and maintain their claws. However, without proper outlets, your furniture may become their favorite scratching post. Fortunately, with a little knowledge and planning, you can protect your home while supporting your cat’s instincts.

**Why Cats Need to Scratch**

* **Claw Maintenance:** Scratching removes the outer sheath of the claw and keeps them sharp.
* **Stretching Muscles:** It’s a full-body stretch that supports feline flexibility and muscle health.
* **Territorial Marking:** Cats leave visual and scent markers when they scratch.
* **Stress Relief:** Scratching is also a way to relieve anxiety or excitement.

**Common Scratching Targets in the Home**

***Furniture Favorites***

Couches, chairs, carpets, and wooden table legs are often targeted because of their texture and accessibility.

**How to Redirect Scratching Behavior**

1. **Provide Multiple Scratching Posts:** Choose sturdy options made of sisal, cardboard, or carpet.
2. **Use Positive Reinforcement:** Reward your cat with treats or praise when they use the post.
3. **Use Deterrents:** Double-sided tape, foil, or pet-safe sprays can discourage scratching in problem areas.
4. **Location Matters:** Place scratching posts near their favorite spots and rest areas.

**Choosing the Right Scratching Post**

* **Height:** Ensure the post is tall enough for a full-body stretch.
* **Stability:** It should be sturdy and not wobble when scratched.
* **Material:** Sisal is often preferred over carpet by many cats.

**Additional Tips for Protecting Your Furniture**

Use furniture covers, place posts strategically, and regularly trim your cat’s claws to reduce damage. Never punish scratching—it’s natural! Instead, redirect and reinforce preferred behaviors.