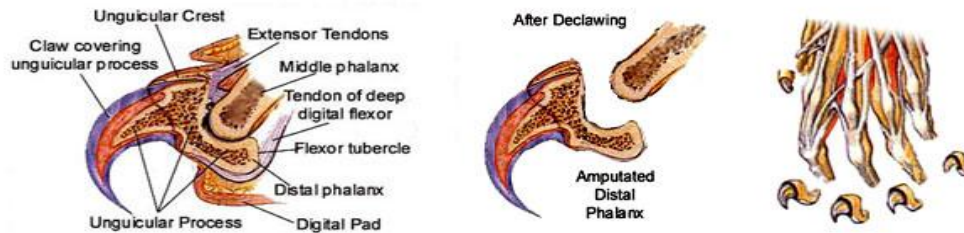




## *The Truth about Declawing*



Adapted from: Atlas of Feline Anatomy for Veterinarians; Hudson/Hamilton, W.B. Saunders Company

[www.declawing.com](http://www.declawing.com)

**Declawing cats can cause permanent harm. Many new cat owners are under the misguided impression that declawing their cats is an easy, harmless, quick fix for unwanted scratching damage.**

The truth is, whether performed with a scalpel or the new laser technique, declawing is major, potentially disfiguring surgery that can have lasting effects on both the cat's physical and behavioral health.

Potential medical complications. Every cat that is declawed experiences day of pain and discomfort. But other, more serious side effects can include infection and tissue necrosis (tissue death) as well as lameness and back pain.

Declawing changes the way a cat's foot meets the ground, causing changes in the way they walk and creating discomfort similar to what humans feel when wearing an ill-fitting pair of shoes. There's also the potential for re-growth of improperly removed claws, nerve damage and bone spurs.

### **Potential behavior complications.**

For several days after the surgery, shredded newspaper must be used in the litter box. The unfamiliar smell and feel of the paper, along with the pain that occurs when scratching in the box, can lead to cats to develop litter box aversion, a behavioral problem that causes them to stop using the litter box because of associating pain with the act of covering waste.

Also, because of the absence of their first line of defense, declawed cats may become biters in situations where they feel threatened or powerless.

Train cats to scratch the right way. Scratching is a normal, healthy cat behavior. They do it to relieve stress, stretch their muscles, mark their territory and remove the outer sheath of their claws. However, this doesn't mean every upholstered surface in the house gets sacrificed to scratching.

Kittens begin to scratch at about eight weeks, which is the perfect time to introduce them to a scratching post, cardboard scratching box or other approved scratching area. Experiment with styles and materials to find what your cat likes best. Adult cats can also be trained to use these surfaces.

Other humane alternatives to declawing include: Regularly trimming cat's claws to minimize damage to surfaces. Soft Paws are soft blunt vinyl caps glued to your cats nails that blunt the nail tip and prevent damage. Reapply approximately every 4-6 weeks. [www.softpaws.com](http://www.softpaws.com)



Here at Lake Side, we will only declaw a cat if it is absolutely necessary and all other options have been tried first, and we will not declaw older or overweight cats. After the procedure the cat stays with us for two nights so we can monitor the feet and give pain injections as needed. We also request that declawed cats are not permitted to go outside they will no longer have one their main defenses.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,

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