

My kitten is already becoming destructive. What can be done?

There are three options that you can consider: frequent nail trims, nail shields, and surgical declawing.

The nails may be trimmed according to the instructions above. However, your cat's nails will regrow and become sharp again in about 4-7 days. Therefore, to protect your property, it will be necessary to clip them one to two times per week.

Offering your new pet a scratching post can help defer away from scratching at furniture. There are some commercially available products that are called nail caps. These are generally made of smooth plastic and attach to the end of the nail with special glue. The nails are still present, but the caps prevent them from causing destruction. After 2-4 weeks the nails will grow enough that the caps will be shed. At that time, you should be prepared to replace them.

Surgical declawing is the removal of the nail at its base. This is done under general anesthesia. There is very little post-surgical discomfort, especially when it is performed on a kitten. Contrary to the belief of some, this surgery does not cause lameness or psychological damage. Actually, a declawed cat will not realize the claws are gone and will continue to "sharpen" the claws as normal without inflicting damage to your furniture. This surgery can be done as early as 12 weeks of age or anytime. If you choose to declaw we recommend that it be done the same time as spaying or neutering. Once declawed, your cat should always live indoors since the ability to defend itself is compromised.

