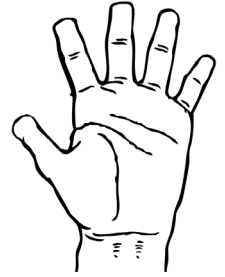


Declawing is an amputation of the first digit of each toe, which is like taking off your fingers at the first knuckle. It is not simply removing the nail. It's a painful procedure that can cause your cat stress for weeks, or months. If it isn't done correctly, the cat can lose part of their pads or, more commonly, there can be painful deformed re-growths that require more surgery. Declawing can cause many problems.



Medical Issues

Declawing is an unnecessary amputation that is illegal in many countries and is being outlawed in parts of the United States. Re-growths can be so painful that the cat can't walk or stand. A cat bears about 60% of their body weight on their front limbs. After declawing, they are forced to bear that weight on parts of their feet that aren't meant to support them, which can result in bruising or lameness years after the surgery. Some cats even have to have multiple "re-declaw" surgeries, which is the only way to relieve the pain.

Emotional Issues

Cats who were recently declawed may go into hiding or resort to biting because they feel helpless.

Behavioral Issues

Declawing a cat can lead to many issues such as litterbox aversion, aggression, and biting. Litterbox aversion can occur because the cat has to stand in the litter on mutilated toes so they may associate that pain with the box. You can use softer litters, but it will still be painful.

Aggression can occur during vet visits because they associate the pain in their feet with the vet. This could lead to higher costs at the vet to sedate them before they are examined or treated. Unfortunately, many people interpret this behavior as the cat just being mean, which leads to handling the cat in a way that reinforces their fear. A cat's first line of defense is their claws. When you take that away, they may try to bite. Scratching is actually way less painful and dangerous than a bite because of the risk of infection.

Along with these issues, your cat could get hurt if they end up outside. Even if you keep your cat indoors, accidents happen. Declawed cats will be at a disadvantage when it comes to climbing and catching food without their claws.

Myths About Declawing

My other cat is declawed. Indoor cats rarely use their claws on each other, so this shouldn't be an issue. Cats in shelters live together and most cats have claws, but some don't and they get along fine.

I don't want my cat to scratch the children. Cats won't scratch unless they're provoked. Teach your child to be gentle, and watch for signs that the cat is getting overstimulated or stressed. Keep the nails trimmed, too!