



Cat furniture tips to help start good scratching habits in kittens and adult cats

The method is the same for any kitten/adult cat...have some fun with the process and bond with your special kitten/cat!

Place their sisal scratching post/furniture in an area they use the most; near their favorite sleeping place, or places they most like to rest and play are good spots.

DO NOT put their paws on the scratching post and force them to scratch; that will only confuse them. (Kittens are born knowing how to scratch; restraining your kitten/cat and then dragging their paws over the scratching post may be very unpleasant and may actually cause them to avoid the post.)

Imitate scratching by using your own fingers on the scratching post (scratching up and down the post to stimulate them to scratch); this often gives them the "right" idea about what they're supposed to do.

DO encourage scratching on the post by playing with dangle-toys on or near the scratching post/furniture; dangle a peacock feather or any other enticing toy right next to the scratching post/furniture (or slowly drag it up the post) and as they go for the toy/feather and dig into the post, they'll feel its irresistible texture. If that doesn't work, you might try placing the scratching post/furniture on its side and enticing kitty by dangling the toy/feather all around it. As they jump on the post or paw at the toy/feather, they'll discover the texture, and they may begin to scratch it at that point. Put the scratching post/furniture upright once kitty knows what it's all about.

Cat furniture - especially the sisal scratching posts - may be scented with catnip or catnip spray but don't overdo it, once a week is enough while training them to use it, then periodically as a treat after that (it's easy for kittens to develop a resistance to the effects of catnip when they are exposed to it at a young age, so wait on that or use it sparingly with kittens). Use praise (lots of it) and food rewards when they scratch the post, so they associate the scratching post with a pleasant response.

Put their favorite food treats on some of the platforms to entice them to climb to higher levels.

Coax them over to the scratching post/furniture after their nap (most cats scratch immediately from waking while performing stretching exercises) and scratch the post with your fingers at a high point on the scratching post/furniture. Again, praise them profusely if they make scratching motions.

If they refuse to use the scratching post/furniture, try again later. NEVER force them to use it, as they may then associate it with something unpleasant. Remember, cats have a mind of their own and do not like being forced into anything. Be patient yet persistent when teaching your cats these new habits and eventually it *will* pay off. Imagine...scratch-free furnishings and a happier co-existence with your pet, it's a win-win situation.

You'll be able to tell if kitty is using the scratching post/furniture when you notice small, crescent-shaped nail sheaths at the base of the post(s).

Tips for those purr-snickety kittens/older cats who persist in their old scratching habits

Cats hate sudden, loud noises, so if you should catch your sweet kitties in the act, here are a few suggestions:

Shake a can full of coins (place some coins in an empty coke can). Wait to see what happens, then repeat the process if the scratching persists.

It has been said that the following works really well: In a loud, low, booming voice or a loud, high-pitched voice (whichever one works, just as long as it doesn't sound like your normal voice) say, "NO _____(your cat's name)," as soon as you see them scratching in a forbidden spot. Then wait and see what happens (they'll probably look at you as if you've lost your mind, but they'll soon begin to associate scratching with a negative response after this is repeated a few times). If the scratching persists, repeat the process until they stop. The reason for using the loud, low, booming voice/loud, high-pitched voice is that sometimes the can of coins isn't nearby and correcting naughty behavior in cats means catching them in the act. It does no good to reprimand your cats after the fact, it must be while the naughty behavior is occurring. And you will most likely get their attention once they hear your new voice.

Clap your hands loudly and say, "NO _____(your cat's name)". Wait to see what happens, then repeat the process if the scratching persists.

This one is going to sound a bit strange, but we've seen results by, yes, hissing at them, and yes you might feel a little foolish doing it at first but it does work with some cats.

Once they've stopped scratching, after using any of these techniques, gently pick your cat up and proceed to the scratching post/furniture, using some of the suggestions in our first section to spark their interest in it.

You can try the above techniques on your cat's other behavioral problems as well, making sure they are only applied when your cats are engaged in their naughty behavior. Be consistent with these techniques and you *will* see results.

NOTE: We, of course, would NEVER advocate slapping or hitting any cat (or any animal, for that matter). Always treat your cats in a humane, respectful manner, just as you would want to be treated, and you will be rewarded ten-fold with their love and affection.

Make their old scratching areas unavailable or cover them with lightweight plastic or aluminum foil (cats hate aluminum foil; tape some sheets of foil over your sofa arms, chairs, or wherever kitty likes to scratch), so that it feels different and less appealing, and to "train" them not to scratch there. Also, try covering the area with a sheet, carefully tucking it in all around and taping the bottom so they can't sneak in underneath it. (Once they start going to their scratching post/furniture on their own, you can remove the furniture coverings.) It would be a good idea to remove your cat's marking smell from any scratching areas as well, as this will deter them from returning to those

areas after you've removed the furniture coverings; try an enzyme cleaner specifically made for this purpose, which you should be able to find at most major pet stores. Then, if you wish, spray the area with a citrus-scented spray, as cats hate the smell of citrus; such a product, designed to detract cats from certain areas, is also available at most major pet stores.

There is a product on the market called "sticky paws" that you can put on furniture. The product is similar to double-sided tape; cats don't like it and won't scratch the area where sticky paws is placed. Sticky paws is water-soluble so it won't leave any residue when removed from furniture. [Learn more at StickyPaws.com](http://StickyPaws.com). (Remove the tape once they start going to their scratching post/furniture on their own.)

Place the scratching post/furniture next to their old scratching area, making sure the scratching post/furniture is covered with a material that is acceptable to them; sisal rope is appealing to most kittens/cats. Please don't throw away their scratching post/furniture the more shredded it becomes, because it's at this point they've just broken it in to their satisfaction, and they won't appreciate it if you throw it away.

Cat furniture and sisal scratching posts should be left in an area they prefer to scratch because your kittens/cats like to scratch in prominent areas of your home.

DO NOT put the scratching post/furniture in an area that your kittens/cats don't frequent, otherwise it may not be used.

Most kittens/cats will quickly learn that they are not allowed to scratch in certain places.

Until your cat can be trusted not to scratch and claw your furniture, you might not want them to run free in the house when you are not there to supervise them. You may want to place them in a separate room, preventing boredom by providing them with plenty of their toys and their scratching post/furniture (this will also help them become acquainted with their scratching post/furniture much quicker, if they have nothing else on which to scratch). However, in saying this, some cats abhor being shut up by themselves in a room, so you will have to play that one by ear.