



CATS' CLAWS

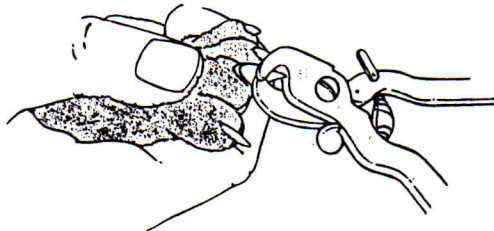
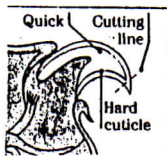
The cat or kitten you adopted from the York County SPCA may already be declawed. In this case you won't have to encounter the debate to declaw or not to declaw.

The York County SPCA feels this is your personal decision. However we have researched the topic to offer you information on claws, and invite you to discuss the issue more in depth with your veterinarian.

We at the SPCA recommend you "give the cat a chance to be good." Listed are some suggestions to practice before deciding to declaw.

1. Provide your cat with its own furniture, such as a **scratching post**. When your cat or kitten starts to scratch your furniture, gently pull it off and place its front paws on the scratching post. Keep the post in an easily-accessible place so the cat becomes accustomed to using it. If an older cat persists in scratching your furniture, give it a squirt of luke warm water from a child's water gun. Spray it anywhere but in the face. At the same time, say "NO". Then take the cat to its scratching post. Shake a small amount of pleasantly scented bath oil on a piece of cotton. Attach the cotton to the part of the furniture that the cat scratches. It will repel as long as the aroma remains.

2. Give your cat a **manicure**.



3. New to the market is a product called "**Soft Paws**." It is a soft plastic-type coating applied to manicured claws that comes in different colors and may be applied by a veterinarian.

4. **Extensor Tenotomy**. This is a surgical procedure that entails cutting the extensor tendon of the claw, preventing the claw from being unsheathed. The surgery is less traumatic than declawing, and healing occurs within a few days. After surgery, owner must be aware of the length of the nails and keep them clipped as needed. The extensor tenotomy is increasing in popularity. Your veterinarian can obtain information about this procedure from a new text or from a veterinarian on-line network.

5. **Declawing**. One method used is called an onychectomy and is usually done under the age of one year and is not recommended for elderly cats. It is not recommended to remove back claws. The declawing procedure is not natural and without pain. The method used is dissection between the bones of the first joint and the toe. The paws are usually completely healed in five to seven days. As the cat will lose an important defense when it is declawed, it may substitute biting to defend itself.