

## Alternative to declawing

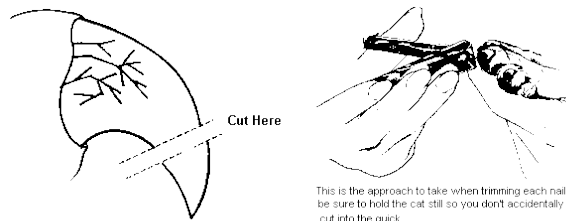
Trimming a cat's claws every few weeks is an important part of maintaining your pet's health and protects him, you and your family as well as the sofa, curtains and other furniture.

### 1. Stay on the cutting edge:

Some people prefer a special pair of scissors modified to hold a cat's claw in place, others prefer human nail clippers, and still others choose pliers-like clippers or those with a sliding blade.

**2. Take paws:** Try resting the cat in the crook of one arm while holding one paw with the other hand. Or, place the animal on a table and lift one paw at a time. If you've got a helper, ask him to hold the cat while you clip the nails, or just ask him to scratch your cat's favorite spot or offer up a special treat.

**3. Take a little off the top:** Take a paw in your hand and use your thumb and pointer finger to gently press down on the top and bottom of the paw on the joint



Originally prepared by Suzanne Hettis, Ph.D. and Kathy Macklem for the DDFL, 1992

just behind the claw. This will cause the claw to extend so you can carefully snip off the sharp tip and no more. Don't get too close to the pink part of the nail called "the quick," where blood vessels and nerve endings lie.

**5. Take it one at a time:** If you aren't able to trim all 10 nails at once, don't worry. Few cats remain patient for more than a few minutes, so do what you can and praise your pet for cooperating.

Source: Humane Society of the United States



**Escondido Humane Society**  
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Escondido Humane Society

## Declawing cats: More than just a manicure

Please consider these  
reasons NOT to declaw



Visit us online at  
[www.escondidohumanesociety.org](http://www.escondidohumanesociety.org)  
for more cat resources

The Escondido Humane Society  
Adoption Center is open from  
10 a.m. to 5 p.m. seven days a week.

## Not a simple surgery

Contrary to most people's understanding, declawing consists of amputating not just the claws, but the whole phalanx (up to the joint), including bones, ligaments and tendons! To remove the claw, the bone, nerve, joint capsule, collateral ligaments and the extensor and flexor tendons must all be amputated. Thus, declawing is not a "simple," single surgery but 10 separate, painful amputations of the third phalanx up to the last joint of each toe. A graphic comparison in human terms would be the cutting off of a person's finger at the last joint of each finger.

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

## What about laser declawing?

During laser surgery, a small, intense beam of light cuts through tissue by heating and vaporizing it, meaning there's less bleeding and a shorter recovery time. But

the surgical technique itself is similar to the traditional method, with the laser simply replacing a steel scalpel blade.

## Tendonectomy

Another procedure effectively deactivates cats' claws by severing the tendons that extend the toes. Called a "tendonectomy," the surgery retains the claws in the paws. But the method has its own set of problems. Because cats are unable to keep their claw length in check through vigorous scratching, owners must continually trim nails to prevent them from growing into the paw pads and causing infections.

## Declawing robs a cat of his chief weapon of defense

A declawed cat does not stand a chance against a large dog, a bigger cat, or a predator. Although he still has teeth, by the time he gets in close enough to bite, it may be too late.

## Altered gait may lead to later joint problems

Domestic cats are digitigrade, meaning they walk on their toes. Walking with an altered gait because of the lack of the first digit of the toes can affect all the joints of the leg, resulting later in arthritis of the hip and other joints.

## Declawing may lead to litter box problems

Declawed cats often associate the pain when digging in litter with the litter box itself, and will avoid it, choosing softer carpeting instead.

Source: Humane Society of the United States

