

Cat Scratching Furniture/Carpet



Why do cats scratch things?

Cats scratch objects in their environment for a number of reasons and it is completely normal behavior. This being said, you probably don't want your favourite couch to be shredded...

My foster cat is scratching my favourite couch (or carpet), how do I get him/her to stop?

We have a number of helpful tips that have been put together to deter your foster cat from scratching furniture or carpet and instead, scratch more appropriate items! Follow this advice to help significantly reduce or eliminate the problem.

- Get multiple scratching posts (different textures such as cheap cardboard ones from Kmart and also bigger/better quality sisal ones from eBay or a pet shop). Some cats prefer horizontal scratching posts and others prefer vertical.
- Hang toys off scratching post to encourage use
- If/when cat uses correct scratching post, reward immediately afterwards with a high-value wet food (such as tuna).
- Enrichment can help (eg. feeding the cat from a tissue box, small kong, open paper bags etc so the cat 'works' for the food). Playing with the cat more may also help.
- Put plastic over area you don't want scratched until cat learns to use scratching post(s).
- Spray cat nip spray on scratching post to encourage cat to scratch there.

If you see the cat scratching the carpet/furniture, DO NOT punish the cat. Instead, distract and re-direct his/her attention with a toy.

Strictly, DO NOT:

- Punish (shout or hit etc) cat for using inappropriate item to scratch
- Hold the cat and force the cat to scratch correct scratching post
- Put plastic caps on your cats paws
- Cut cats nails unnecessarily. Only cut nail if they're long.

If the cat is still scratching furniture or other items and you have followed the above tips for several weeks, contact your Foster Mentor for further advice if you are fostering for Kemps Creek (or the Welfare Officer if you're fostering for an AWL NSW branch).