



# Wilmette Pet Center

*"the place for people who love pets"*

## Cats and their nails

Nails are very important to a cat; they are an integral part of who they are. They are used in the wild for hunting, communicating with other cats, and for defense. Even though they may not need them for these reasons in the house, they still influence their behavior. And their nails need to be cared for, a job that many people find daunting – but it doesn't need to be! Keeping your cat's nails trimmed will help protect your furniture, protect you from scratches while playing, and prevent injuries.



There are a lot of tips for trimming a cat's nails; these are some of the most effective:

- Start young: making nail trims a part of a kitten's life will make it easier as an adult.
- Play with their feet: Make it okay for you to be touching them. Start by doing it for only a short time and gradually increase. Once they are more comfortable with you handling their paws, start bringing the trimmers close by their feet to get them used to them.
- Special treats: Find two or three special treats that she loves, and reserve them for nail trim time. It'll make it even more special and easier to do.
- When you start trimming, stay calm yourself; your nervousness will be sensed by your kitty. Have someone else hold the cat to make it a much easier job; using one hand to scruff them while supporting the body with the other will make it easier to access their feet. Do one or two nails, offer a treat, then move to the others.
- Trim nails every 4 to 6 weeks depending on how fast they grow; the quick will grow back and you can keep the nails nice and short.
- Do not use human nail clippers as the curved blade could accidentally cut into the cat's pad. Use either guillotine or nipper nail cutter made especially for pets.



- Keep some Quick Stop on hand; if you nip the quick, press some of the powder into the tip of the nail to stop the bleeding and prevent infections.

For more tips and detailed instructions on how to trim your cat's nails,

check out the ASPCA's [website](#).

Still sound like it's too much? Bring them in! We charge \$10 for any trim, no appointment necessary!

**Scratching:** Scratching is a natural part of a cat's nail care routine, as it helps shed the rough and frayed outer layer of the nail. This can sometimes be a source of great frustration for their owners, as sometimes cats chose your couch or valuable rug for their own use. But there are ways to retrain them and save your furniture!

### Scratching posts

These tools are a great way for your cat to engage in their natural behavior while saving your precious furniture. They come in a variety of shapes, sizes, and materials.

Cardboard makes a great scratching post. It has a texture that cats love (cats are often tearing into the packaging to scratch them up). When they've torn it up, you can then flip it over and get twice the scratching time!

Plant fiber: Products like sisal, wicker, or seaweed are natural, durable, attractive, and make excellent surfaces for cats to scratch on.

To help encourage your cat to use their posts, try the following:

- Placing the posts in a sunny location where they nap or by their food; after sleeping and eating, it's very natural for a cat to stretch. Having their post nearby will help encourage them to stretch and scratch there.
- Taller posts are easier and more natural for cats to use, as they like to stretch up high to drag their nails down.
- Show them how to use it. The old technique of pressing out your cat's nails and showing them how to scratch simply doesn't work (like we can ever show a cat what to do!) Instead, try to turn it into a game: use a string and get them to chase it. Making them chase



The Cozy Scratcher Den provides multiple scratching surfaces plus a cozy cave for nap time.



The SmartCat Ultimate Scratcher is making it easy and natural for cats to use.

it up the post will show them what the post is for and encourage them to use it.

- Add an attractant: catnip placed at the top of the post will make them stretch up to investigate it. While there they will extend their nails and get used to using the post for scratching.

Check out the new cat furniture by Vesper! One of the most elegant and attractive line of cat furniture we have ever seen, with built-in nooks, sleeping spots, toys, and scratching surfaces. The cushions and scratching surfaces are removable and replaceable, so it'll stay function and looking good in your home.



The new Vesper cat furniture, available in a variety of shapes and sizes.



The V – High Lounge is a cool and contemporary observation deck and resting place in one.

The V-Cube has a big cube cave mounted to a steel tube frame and a sisal scratching pad mounted vertically on the side.

The V-Lounge features a memory foam mattress, great for both cats and small dogs.



## Repellents

It's very helpful to teach your cat where *not* to scratch. There are a wide variety of scents that cats dislike and find repellent. Use Pet Organics No Scratch or Four Paws Keep Off on items you do not want them to scratch, like the leather couch, the new rug, or those old dining room seats.

Tip: To avoid spraying on your furniture, try spraying the repellent on an old washcloth or paper towel and tuck it in/around the furniture to get the same effect.



## Ultimate tool

For severe cases, a spray bottle of water can be useful tool to dissuade a cat that persists in scratching in the wrong place. Mixing the water with some vinegar serves as a safe and memorable lesson for a lot of cats.

Caring for your cat's nails is an important part of being a good owner, and it's a task that should not be stressful for both you and your cat. There are effective and attractive tools to prevent them from tearing up your furniture or your rugs. Keeping their nails trimmed will help save your furniture, keep their feet safe, and makes play time a lot more pleasant and fun for you, too.