



Should I Clip my Cat's Claws?

By Dr Gretta Howard – Senior Veterinarian

Whether or not to clip your cat's claws depends on a number of factors including your cat's activity levels, whether they live totally indoors or venture outside and the age of your cat.

Cats often use their claws to climb, which includes climbing trees to escape potential threats, so for outdoor cats, clipping your cat's claws can potentially compromise their safety. Cats that spend time outside may also use their claws to fend off predators, such as another cat that enters their territory.

Usually, cats learn to scratch on surfaces, such as tree trunks (outdoors) or a scratching post (indoors) that help to shed the outside layer of their claw to prevent overgrown claws. Cats that live indoors should be offered a scratching post or surface specifically for this purpose. Some come in the form of cardboard in a cross-hatch pattern (Cardboard Cat Scratcher), which they absolutely love to scratch! For households with wooden floorboards, offering an old piece of carpet for scratching purposes can be a source of great pleasure for cats. You may find that if you don't offer something specific for the purpose of scratching, he or she may help themselves to their favourite (and usually most expensive) furniture item to scratch their nails on, such as your new leather lounge....

For cats where the nails are causing problems such as repeatedly scratching children, clawing your lap whilst getting comfortable (ouch!) or getting the nails stuck in the carpet or screen door, nail clipping is recommended.

Senior age cats need more regular nail clipping as they often suffer from osteoarthritis and are less mobile, so less able to use their legs to scratch on surfaces to allow natural nail shedding. This can lead to thickened nails and potentially even nails growing so long that they grow into the foot pads – an extremely painful situation to be in!

If you need your cat's nails trimmed, your vet can do this in your next consultation and even



give you a demonstration of the technique. In between veterinary consultations, our nurses are available for cat nail trims by booking in with our Customer Care Team.