

## Essay On Declawing Cats For Students

In the 1960s many people in America started keeping their cats strictly indoors because the world outside was becoming more dangerous.

The only problem was that cats need to scratch to exercise their muscles and to keep their claws healthy, because digging them in to scratch removes the outer layer. But they couldn't do this any more on outside objects like fences and trees.

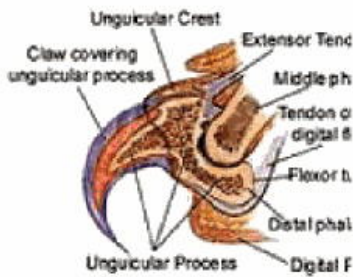
So they used the furnishings in the house and of course people don't like their couch or carpet or wallpaper scratched.

So declawing was invented and since then cat caretakers have been happy about that, thinking that their cats simply went into the veterinary clinic, were given anaesthetic and their ten front claws removed. The eight back claws are not usually removed too because they don't damage the furniture like the front claws could.

It was thought at the time that indoor cats don't need front claws because they don't need to defend themselves against other cats or wild animals or people who would hurt them outdoors.

Japanese researchers experimented on litters of kittens in the 1970s to 'perfect' declawing and vets in some other countries would declaw cats and kittens too, but the procedure was most popular in North America and Canada.

**EACH CLAW ON A CAT'S PERFECT  
PAW BEFORE DECLAWING**



**AFTER DECLAWING**



**WHICH IS THE AMPUTATION  
OF THE TEN LAST TOE JOINTS**



**EACH TOE ENDS IN A  
STUMP OF BONE WHICH  
THE CAT HAS TO WALK ON**

**DECLAWING IS ILLEGAL OR CONSIDERED  
EXTREMELY INHUMANE AND RARELY DONE  
IN THIRTY NINE COUNTRIES SO FAR**



The policy of the AVMA (The American Veterinary Medical Association) was that declawing should be a last resort procedure for cats with serious scratching behaviour, but people started having their kittens declawed at the same time as he or she was neutered. Declawing vets encouraged this by offering it to clients and some still do that now, giving discounts on neutering/declawing packages.

As the years went by it was noticed that many declawed cats were developing problems, but the vets denied it was to do with the declawing.

For a long time not many people knew that declawing is major surgery for a cat because the last joint of each toe is removed, not only the claw joined to that toe bone.

In other countries the vets knew about declawing but in places such as the UK it didn't happen to cats because most were allowed outdoors, but also they had scratching posts or pads indoors too which they used to keep their claws healthy.

In fact the vets in the UK were shocked at the number of kittens being declawed in America, it was surgery they would be very reluctant to do if asked for.

It is known now that the complications from declawing can be physical, or mental, or both.

Physical complications:

- Litter box avoidance...this is because newly declawed cats suffer pain in the paws and digging in cat litter really hurts. So they

begin to blame the litter tray and use soft furnishings like the carpet instead.

- Stress related illnesses....such as cystitis and eczema.
- Lameness, abscesses in the paws, claw regrowth, bone splinters and some cats even have bone protruding through the pads on their paws because they try to use their claws, they can't understand why they are unable to scratch as they need to, to exercise.
- As declawed cats grow older many develop painful arthritis. This is because they are unable to dig in their claws and stretch their muscles and also because when they were first declawed they had to learn to walk in a new way. Cats normally walk as ballerinas dance, on the tips of their toes. With parts of their toes missing, declawed cats can't walk that way any more.

Mental complications:

1. Cats without claws feel defenceless and many start to bite to protect themselves.
2. Some cats have changed personalities, they become depressed, fearful or aggressive.

Declawing a cat ruins his life!

People who love and understand that cats need their claws have been fighting for many years to have declawing banned. It is now illegal or considered extremely inhumane in 39 countries, which are:

Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, England, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany,

Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, New Zealand, Northern Ireland, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Scotland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Wales and Yugoslavia.

Ironically although declawing kittens was researched in Japan, it is one of the countries where it is now illegal.

The Paw Project was formed in America and they have so far managed to get declawing banned in 8 Californian Cities, which are; Berkeley, Beverley Hills, Burbank, Culver City, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Santa Monica and West Hollywood.

A lot more is known now about the physical complications of declawing and the Paw Project vets are gathering scientific proof of it in the hopes that all vets will stop declawing.

They also repair the paws of suffering declawed cats, large and small, to make them pain free or at least more comfortable, but the toe ends of those cats can never be replaced.

Sadly it has become a way of making a lot of money for declawing vets, they continue to do it by making the excuse that it keeps cats in their homes. It does not!

Many declawed cats are in Rescue Shelters because their owners can't cope with the physical complications, mainly the biting and the litter box avoidance.

Anti-declaw advocates are ceaselessly trying to educate all cat lovers as to the cruelty of declawing and to the alternatives, such as providing a scratching post, trimming the cats claws or using 'soft paws' which are nail caps which cover the sharp claws.

Some American vets have always known that declawing is wrong and refused to do it, some have stopped declawing, but many are still doing this surgery and will continue to do so as long as they can.

But one day declawing will be banned world-wide and consigned to the history books where it belongs and no more cats will have to live their lives without their very essential claws.

*This essay was written by Ruth aka Kattaddorra, world renowned authority on cat declawing and a campaigner against it.*

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