

CAT SCRATCHING PREFERENCES

All cats have an instinctive need to scratch and will use anything nearby to satisfy their craving — your antique chair, curtains, carpet, you name it — until they are trained to utilize the right surfaces.

But did you know your cat might be scratching your furniture in an attempt to show you they actually have a scratching preference which is not being met?



The word "training" is rarely associated with our dear cats, but it really should be. They are routine-bound animals, consequently making great training candidates — but training cats is incredibly different from training dogs. While dogs have the urge to please humans, cats need to see a compelling reason to perform any kind of behavior other than the ones they are conditioned to, so you must find a motivating trigger that gets them to act differently. This means encouraging them to, in other words, build a positive association and use positive reinforcement.

ORIENTATION

VERTICAL
HORIZONTAL

The first step to training Fluffy to scratch the right things is to discover why she is showing certain surfaces extra love and ignoring others, which is simply done by observing where she is scratching.

Have you noticed her going for your rugs or carpet? If that's the case, provide her a **horizontal** scratcher — one that won't easily move as she tries to scratch it.

Is she loving on your curtains or the back of your sofa instead? Then what you need is a **vertical** scratcher — long enough to allow a good body stretch and sturdy enough that it won't wobble or fall on her head.



MATERIAL

CARDBOARD
SISAL
JUTE
CARPET
etc...

The material used is also something you need to consider before making a purchase. Nowadays, there are so many options to try! The most common are **cardboard**, **sisal**, **carpet**, and **jute**. Other **specialized fabrics**, **natural wood**, and **wickerwork** are less frequently found. Use common sense when deciding on a material. For example, if you want to train your cat to not scratch carpet/rugs, a carpet scratcher could give her the wrong message and make training extra challenging.



Once you feel you've found the perfect scratcher, the last step before making the swap is supplying a "YES" to every "NO". When you are trying to teach your kitty she shouldn't scratch the back of the couch, make it unpleasant for her to do it by adding double-sided cat sticky tape to it (the "no"), while providing her the correct scratching object near the same location that she can immediately reroute to (the "yes"). Keep in mind no unpleasantness should ever come from you but rather with something she will not associate directly with you, which should remain in place at all times (such as tin foil, sticky tape, Pet Safe SSSCAT, Keep Off spray, etc). Until she gets used to the new scratcher, adding attractive things such as catnip or a toy to the new scratcher might also help.