

Declawing Cats

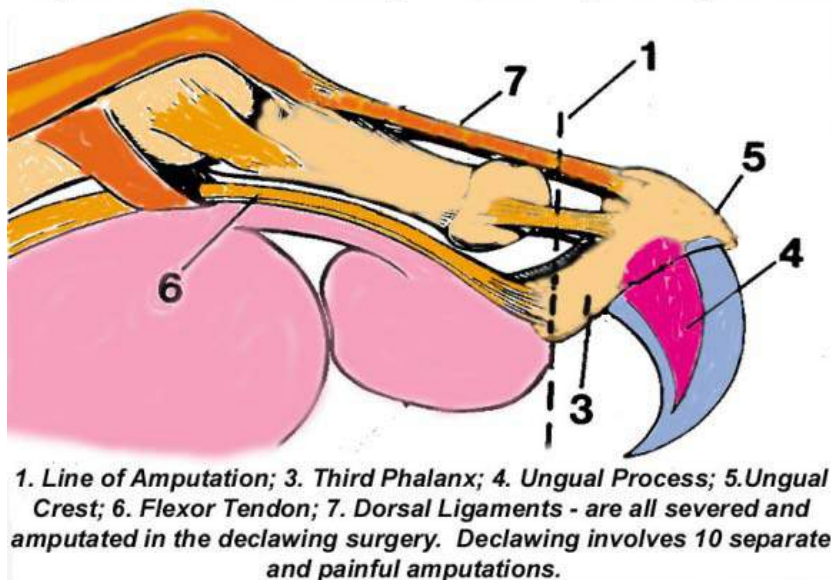
Declawing cats is against the policy of the Georgian Triangle Humane Society. We advocate for the humane and ethical treatment of animals and therefore do not condone a practice that can lead to a decrease in the welfare of any animal.

Declawing is considered an inhumane practice and as such, it has been banned in most countries around the world. It is illegal in Japan, Italy, France, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Norway, Sweden Netherlands, Ireland, Finland, Slovenia, Portugal, Belgium, Brazil, Australia, New Zealand, Yugoslavia and Great Britain.

Understanding Declawing (Onychectomy)

Declawing is a surgical procedure in which a cat's toes are amputated. Portions of their paws, not just the nails, are removed. This is equivalent to a person losing the entire top of every finger at the first knuckle.

Onychectomy: "Declawing" - Feline Digital Amputation



Adapted from: Textbook of Small Animal Surgery 2nd ed; Slatter D; W.B. Saunders Co.



The Cat's Claws

Unlike most animals that walk on the soles of their paws, cats are digitigrades which means they walk on their toes. This means that declawed cats can no longer walk or exercise properly because they have lost bones, tendons and ligaments in their feet. This affects their posture and both their physical and emotional health. Initial recovery takes a few weeks, but even after the surgical wounds have healed, there are often long-term physical and psychological effects such as permanent lameness, limping, arthritis, aggressive biting, litter box avoidance and other long-term complications.

Psychological & Behavioral Complications

Deprived of their primary means of defense, cats can become nervous, fearful, and/or aggressive, often resorting to their only remaining means of defense, their teeth. In some cases, when declawed cats use the litter box after surgery, their feet are so tender they associate their new pain with the box resulting in a life-long aversion to using the litter box. Other declawed cats that can no longer mark territory with their claws, mark with urine instead resulting in inappropriate elimination problems.

Alternatives to Declawing:

1. Trim your cats nails regularly (a veterinarian will be happy to show you how to do this)
2. Buy or make a good scratching post.
3. Try a product called 'Sticky Paws' to help curb unwanted scratching behavior
4. Purchase 'Soft Paws' from your local pet store to cover the cats' nails.
5. Play with your cat using interactive tools such as a string, laser pointer or other toys available at most pet stores.