

Myths and Rumors: What people hear about declawing

MYTH #1: *After declawing a cat is likely to become fearful or experience behavior changes impairing an affectionate relationship with its owner*

Numerous scientific studies have been unable to document any behavior changes post-declaw. In fact, in one survey 70% of owners of declawed cats reported an improved relationship with their cat after the procedure.

MYTH #2: *A declawed cat cannot climb trees*

Declawed cats are not as effective at climbing trees as cats with claws but declawing does not prevent tree climbing.

MYTH #3: *A declawed cat cannot catch prey*

Declawed cats are not as effective at catching prey as cats with claws but declawing does not prevent effective hunting.

MYTH #4: *A declawed cat has lost its ability to defend itself and should not be allowed outside*

This one is actually true. Without claws, a cat has indeed lost an important part of its defense system. We feel strongly that declawed cats should be housed indoors only.

MYTH #5: *Declawed cats are more likely to bite since they can no longer claw*

Declawed cats do not seem to realize they have no claws. They will continue to scratch ineffectively as if they did not know the difference. Studies have shown no increased biting tendency after declawing.

MYTH #6: *The post-operative period involves tremendous pain*

The declawed cat will indeed have sore feet after surgery. The larger the cat, the more the discomfort and reluctance to bear weight. Pain relievers are often prescribed. However, this recovery period should not last longer than a week or so. Healing should be complete by 2 weeks.

MYTH #7: *A declawed cat will not use a litter box again*

It is very important that litter not get impacted in the declaw incisions during the recovery period. Shredded paper is the usual recommendation during recovery and some cats simply will not use shredded paper. The recycled newspaper litters such as Yesterdays News are an excellent alternative. The only litter problem one might expect would be lack of acceptance of a new litter during the recovery period. Declawed cats do not lose their litter box instinct.