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**Cats and Furniture: Solving Common Issues**

**Why Cats Scratch and How to Manage It**

Scratching is normal for cats. They scratch to mark territory, stretch their muscles, and keep their claws healthy. But when your cat scratches furniture or carpets, it can be frustrating. Here’s how to help:

* **Provide Scratching Options**: Give your cat scratching posts, pads, or cat trees to use instead of furniture. Place them in areas where your cat likes to scratch and near resting spots. Try different materials like sisal, cardboard, or carpet to see what they like best.
* **Attract Cats to the Right Spot**: Sprinkle catnip on the scratching post to make it more appealing. Reward your cat with treats or attention when they use the scratching post instead of the furniture.
* **Use Deterrents on Furniture**: If your cat keeps scratching furniture, try using double-sided tape or furniture covers as gentle deterrents. These can make the surface less appealing to scratch.

**Why Declawing Isn’t a Good Option**

Declawing might seem like a quick fix, but it doesn’t solve scratching problems. It actually removes part of the cat’s toes, not just the claws. This can cause long-term pain and make walking difficult, sometimes leading to behavior issues like biting or avoiding the litter box because they’re uncomfortable. In some places, declawing is illegal because it’s harmful to cats. Instead, focus on providing scratching posts and other safe outlets for scratching.

**Managing Climbing and Jumping**

Cats naturally love to climb and jump. They feel safe up high, and it lets them explore. But when cats jump on counters or tables, it can be a problem.

* **Create Safe Climbing Spots**: Give your cat places they can jump and climb safely, like a cat tree or wall shelves. You can buy these or make simple shelves with supplies from a home improvement store.
* **Discourage Off-Limit Areas**: Use gentle deterrents like double-sided tape or motion-activated sprays to keep them off specific areas. But always give them access to other climbing spots they can enjoy.

**Controlling Shedding and Hairballs**

Shedding is a normal part of a cat’s life, but it can make a mess and lead to hairballs. Long-haired cats shed more and might need more help to keep their fur under control.

* **Brush Regularly**: Brushing your cat often helps reduce loose fur, keeping it off furniture and out of their stomach, which can help prevent hairballs.
* **Healthy Diet**: A diet rich in omega-3 fatty acids can improve your cat’s coat and reduce shedding. You might also consider specialized cat foods or hairball treatments. Talk to your vet or someone at a reliable pet supply store for advice on the best diet to help reduce hairballs and support your cat’s health.

Taking these steps helps keep your home cleaner and your cat comfortable. Regular grooming, providing safe scratching spots, and setting up climbing areas can make a big difference in your cat’s behavior and happiness.