



## Kitten 101: Destructive Behavior

Destructive behavior in kittens often results from scratching behavior targeted at household items. Although destructive, this is normal feline behavior.

### Related Topics:

- LITTER BOX TRAINING
- EARLY DEVELOPMENT
- MARKING
- SOCIALIZATION

### Destructive Behavior



Your kitten is equipped with some very serious hardware for practicing destructive habits. Retractable claws and sharp teeth can make easy work of many household items. Scratching being the most common source, serves many functions for your kitten / cat. Scratching is a communication tool (leaving both scent and visual marks of the site), a way to clean and condition the claw beds, and a great way to stretch the muscles of the legs and toes.

It is important to remember that is a natural part of kitten development. Be patient and provide options for your kitten's scratching needs. If focused correctly, scratching can be a healthy outlet and your furniture will survive!

### Things to Do

- Identify your cat's preferred scratching scenario by studying your cat's habits and most importantly where they inappropriately scratch. Considerations;
  - Surface Orientation (horizontal vs. vertical)
  - Substrates & Materials
  - Locations
- Buy or build scratching posts / pads that mimic you cat's preferred scratching scenario. Considerations;
  - Any vertical posts should be tall & sturdy to prevent the object from toppling over and causing injury to family members and/or pet(s).
  - Material should allow for good grip (fabric / carpet / soft wood / rope / etc.)
- Locate your scratching 'post' / object in a place where your cat can comfortably and safely access. Considerations;
  - Near resting spots
  - Near frequented pathways
- Some additional considerations to attract and keep your cat's attention;
  - Sprinkle cat nip on or around
  - Playing with toys on or around
  - Reward with treats
  - Spray with Feliway pheromone

### Things to Avoid

- Your cat is agile and often very persistent. Do not use avers or negative reinforcement methods to deter your cat.
- Rather, to discourage your cat from scratching inappropriate targets;
  - Cover area with adhesive substrate (ex. double sided adhesive tape)
  - Spray area with a commercial repellent
  - Motion activated deterrents
  - Spray bottle with water
- Try to avoid high traffic areas where access is restrained or is at high risk of accident.