



**Illinois Student Chapter of American
Association of Feline Practitioners**

— Open House Booth —

Feline Myths and Paw-some Facts

Myth 1:
**Declawing a cat is the same as cutting your
fingernails**



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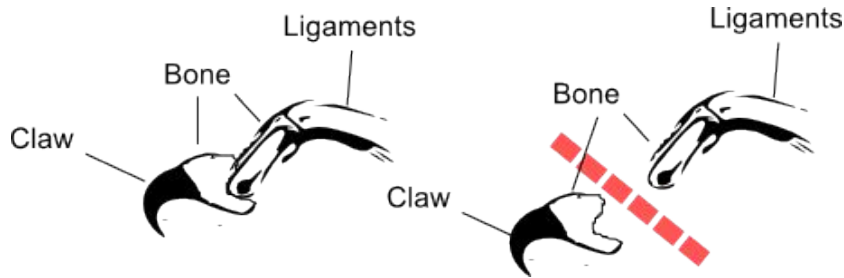


Truth: Declawing a cat is an *amputation* that is the equivalent of cutting your finger off at the first knuckle

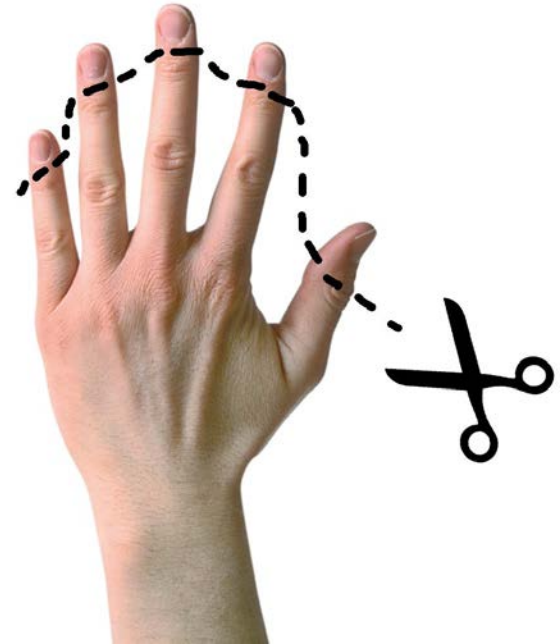
Declawing is a **surgical procedure** where the last segment of the cat's toe is amputated⁴.

This procedure is actually illegal in 21 countries around the world and even some cities in the US! Some of the countries that have banned declawing include:

- England
- Italy
- Germany
- France
- Brazil
- And many more!



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What are some of the risks with declawing a cat?

Every surgery comes with its own set of risks, including complications during the actual surgery and the risk that comes with putting your animal under general anesthesia, but there can also be negative side effects of declawing your cat even after a successful surgery. Some of these include:

- Pain and/or infection at the surgical site
- Lameness or unwillingness to walk
- Back pain (from the change in posture required to walk after the amputation)
- Behavioral changes such as increased biting, urinating outside the litter box, and others

See the American Veterinary Medical Association's stance on declawing and talk to your veterinarian about these and other potential risks ⁵

What are some alternative options for people concerned about the cat scratching?

Lots of people want a cat but are concerned about it scratching up furniture or even scratching people. Scratching is a normal cat behavior and is part of cat ownership, and here are some ways to help manage where/what your cat scratches and minimize damage⁵:

- Keep your cat's nails trimmed!
- Have lots of scratching posts/scratching materials around your house/apartment
- Purchase furniture protectors/covers
- Talk to your vet about soft caps for your cat's claws!
- Purchase special deterrents (like Sticky Paws™ or deterrent spray) to keep your cat from scratching furniture



Image from Flickr by [Robert Parviainen](#)



Myth 2:

Cats can't be taught tricks like dogs can

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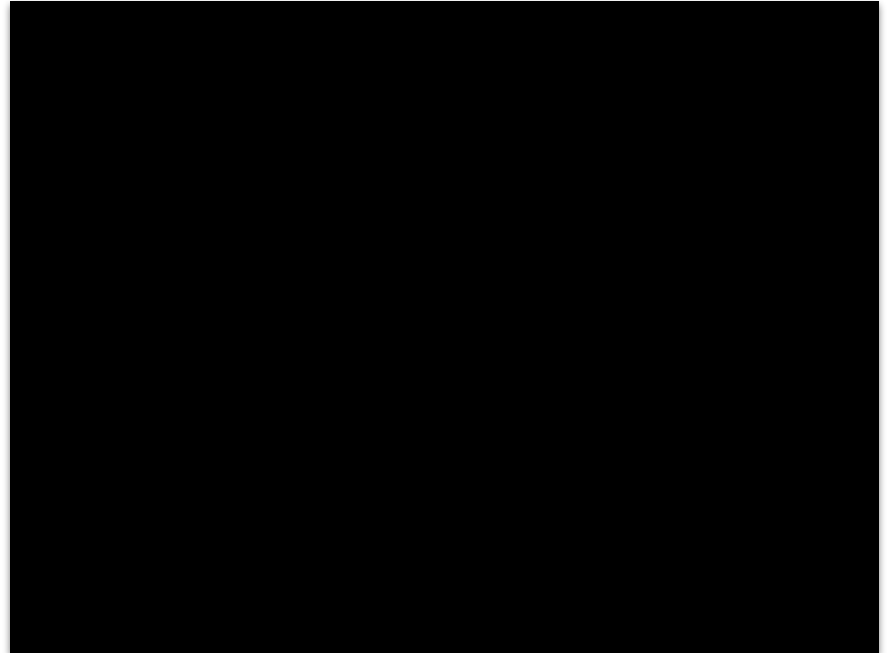
BUSTED!

Truth: Any animal can learn tricks if you know how to motivate them!

Meet Buzz!

- Buzz's humans have cared for her since she was found as a 3-day-old kitten
- They love enriching her life by teaching her tricks and rewarding her with tasty treats!

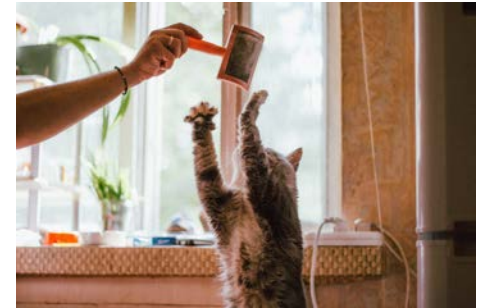
Check out the [Amazing AcroCats](#) if you want to see more super talented rescue cats!



Teaching tricks - Think pawsitively!

Just like with dogs, you can use positive reinforcement to teach your cat all kinds of things! Find out what your cat really likes, and use that to encourage the behaviors you want! Some common rewards are:

- Treats
- Catnip
- Brushing
- Favorite toys
- Good ol' fashioned scratches!



Myth 3:

**Cats don't need properly formulated diets like dogs
do**

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BUSTED!

Truth: Just like dogs (and us too), cats require food formulated to their specific needs

- Cats are obligate carnivores! This means that they get their nutrients from eating meat
- Cats evolved as hunters in the wild and are used to eating high amounts of protein, moderate amounts of fat, and a minimal amount of carbohydrates¹



So, what should you feed your cat?

- The Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO) is a good starting place²
- When selecting what food to feed, pick a product labeled for your cat's stage of life and condition
 - Is your cat still a kitten? Is your cat a senior? Is your cat a little overweight?
 - There is a food out there for every cat!
- The most important thing is that your cat loves the food you feed them!
 - Palatable food = yummy food



Myth 4:

I don't need to give my cat monthly parasite prevention like I do my dog

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Truth: Cats CAN get heartworm disease

- Heartworm disease is an infection caused by a parasitic roundworm that is transmitted by mosquitoes.
- When a mosquito bites, the larva enters the blood and eventually grows into an adult worm that attacks vital organs, such as the lungs and heart.
- Although more common in dogs, cats get more severe symptoms.
- Both indoor and outdoor cats can get heartworm disease.
- No approved treatment is available for cats so prevention is key!

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Truth: Cats need flea prevention

- Fleas are wingless insects that live their entire adult life on their host.
- Fleas continue their life cycle by laying eggs underneath the animal's skin, when the larva hatches they drop and explore their surrounding environment (aka your house).
- Fleas can be a host for tapeworms and can introduce many infectious agents, such as *Yersinia pestis*, *Rickettsia typhi*, and many others.
- Due to fleas rapid growth and spread, getting rid of them can prove difficult.
- Good news: Many prevention methods contain flea control and heartworm prevention in one chew or topical tube. Just make sure you're getting prevention made for cats!



Cat flea image from [Oregon Department of Agriculture](#)

Myth 5:
Indoor cats don't need vaccines

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BUSTED!

Truth: Indoor cats DO need vaccinations, to help keep them healthy

- Just like cats' diets are formulated to their specific life stage, so are vaccinations
- Indoor cats are still prone to disease and sickness, even if they *only* live inside your house
- The American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA) recommends core vaccines every year from the kitten to senior stage³
- Talk to your veterinarian to discuss what vaccines are right for your cat!



Myth 6:

Common household items are not toxic to my cat

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Pyrantel Pamoate

Toxic or Not?

Take your guess and go to the next slide to see the answers!



Lilies



Wheat Grass



Pyrethrin



Acetaminophen



Pyrantel Pamoate

Toxic or Not?



Lilies



Wheat Grass



Pyrethrin



Acetaminophen



Toxic or Not?



Pyrantel Pamoate- SAFE! This is used as a dewormer in cats- can be dangerous if overdosed

Lilies - TOXIC! Causes renal (kidney) damage and failure



Wheat Grass- SAFE! Can be a fun snack for your cat



Pyrethrin: TOXIC! Causes neurologic symptoms like seizures



Acetaminophen- TOXIC! Causes liver toxicity and necrosis

Myth 7:
Cats are not affectionate

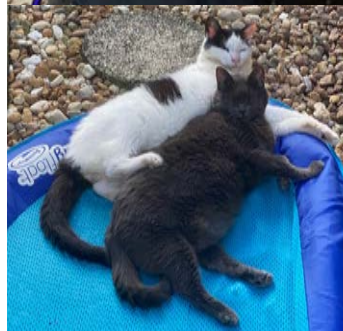
**Myth 7:
Cats are not affectionate**

BUSTED!

Truth: Cats can be very affectionate!



Even to dogs!



References

1:

<https://www.vet.cornell.edu/departments-centers-and-institutes/cornell-feline-health-center/health-information/feline-health-topics/feeding-your-cat>

2: <https://talkspetfood.aaafco.org/rightpetfood>

3:

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4:

<https://www.humanesociety.org/resources/declawing-cats-far-worse-manicure>

5:

<https://www.avma.org/resources-tools/animal-health-and-welfare/declaw-or-not>