

Behavior & Theory

Scratching furniture: Most often is to sharpen their claws and to loosen old nail. Cats are also leaving scent from the sweat glands on the pads of their paws. This is done to mark their territory. Once their scent is on an object, they often return to the object and apply their scent again. Keep the post where they most often spend their time. Scratching usually occurs after a nap or when they are playing. Keeping scent off by using a cleaner with enzyme odor remover and spraying daily with a designed product will help. Citronella or Bitter Apple spray is a start. Here is a site that has lots of information. <http://declaw.lisaviolet.com/>

Stalking and pouncing: Cats are naturally predators and you can be the prey. Some will attack your ankles, hands or arms. Make sure you do not condone this behavior. Correct him with a loud noise or a puff of air in his face, then channel him in on his toys.

Keeping you up at night: Some believe cats are nocturnal but they are not. Cats can get restless and bored at night. Not much can be done about this but to have a play session before bedtime. Sometimes a full belly can help. Don't give into to him if he wants you up, for this will teach him bad habits.

Dog is eating cat feces: This is more common in households than owners will admit. Not much can be done to stop the dog. You can purchase something to make the feces taste horrible. Vets usually carry a product called For-bid. For larger dogs a covered litter box is hard to get into. Some households place a baby gate in front of the litter box.

Cat is soiling outside of litter box: If you are having troubles with this there are some common remedies. Clean and scoop more frequently and wash box once a week. Change types of litter. Some do not liked scented kind. Avoid plastic liners. Change location or add another litter box. Some behaviorists feel litter boxes are often too small. If you catch them in the act trigger a startle response such as water or a loud noise. It is best if the cat does not associate you with the correction. Punishing the cat will probably increase the stress on the cat.

Is it true that pregnant women should not clean litter boxes: Yes it is true! Women should not clean boxes when pregnant due to an intestinal parasite called Toxoplasma. The organism is found in feces and can harm and unborn child. Although rare, it is better that someone else does the duty. Some human doctors might recommend finding another home for the cat. That is not necessary for you to do. Toxoplasma can also be found in soil where cats have defecated or in undercooked meat.

Two are better than one: Cats that have a playmate tend to be more socially well adjusted and avoid behavior problems like shyness, biting, hissing, being frightened and hiding in the company of people they don't know. It is more likely that people return an adopted cat to behavior problems when only one has been adopted rather than two. Cats are much less likely to gain weight due to lack of movement and to suffer related illnesses. They are less likely to ruin furniture out of boredom. If you must work long hours or travel for a couple of days, two or more cats keep each other company and are more tranquil during your absences. The workload to care for two cats remains relatively the same. You don't need more space for a second cat because "Two are better than one"!!