



## ***Top Ten Paw Care Tips***

Cats need healthy feet to scratch, climb and achieve their famed acrobatic landings. That's why it's important to regularly examine and clean your cat's paws and make sure they're wound-free.

### **1. Footloose & Fancy Free**

First things first—your cat's feet should always be kept clean. No dirt, litter or household chemicals should soil her paws. Aside from causing pain, unhealthy substances that stick to her feet may end up on her tongue during grooming. Once each day, give your cat's paws a gentle wipe with a damp cloth. Make sure to check in between her toes and around the paw pads. And keeping your floors and other surfaces free of debris and household chemicals will go a long way to help keep your cat's feet (and your furniture) clean.

### **2. Curiosity...Gulp!**

Cats are natural explorers who sometimes get into foreign places—it comes with the territory for both indoor and outdoor dwellers. So check your little wanderer's paws regularly for any cuts, sores, splinters or swellings that may need tending to.

### **3. Scritch Scratch**

Felines need to scratch to shed their outer nail sheaths that reveal the sharp, smooth claws underneath. Provide your kitty with a few different kinds of scratching posts so that she won't get bored and choose to use your furniture. Encourage her to investigate the posts by scenting them with catnip.

### **4. Nail It**

Prepare your cat for a nail-trimming by massaging his paws, so that she gets used to the feeling of having them touched. We recommend that you start by doing just one or two claws per session. When she seems calm and relaxed, follow these steps:

- Apply gentle pressure to the top of the foot and cushiony pad underneath—this will cause her to extend her claws.
- Use sharp, high-quality cat nail scissors to cut off the white tip of each nail, just before the point where it begins to curve.
- Take care to avoid the quick, a vein that runs into the nail. This pink area can be seen through the nail.
- If you do accidentally cut into this pink area, it may bleed, in which case you can apply some styptic powder to stop the bleeding.
- Make sure you praise your cat and offer her a favorite treat whenever you handle her paws and trim nails.



## 5. Hairy Feet

Long-haired kitties may have hair sprouting in between their toes. If this irritates your cat (you'll know if she licks at the hair obsessively), trim these lovely locks gently with a small pair of rounded scissors.

## 6. Happy Feet

Check your cat's feet regularly to make sure they're free of wounds and infections. Remove splinters or debris gently with tweezers and clean any small cuts. If you notice any blood, pus or an unusual odor, please take your cat to the vet to check for infection.

## 7. Protect the Pads

Be wary of your kitty's sensitive paw pads. In hot and cold weather, moisturize them with a vet-recommended product and try to avoid letting your cat's feet touch freezing patios, hot sidewalks or other uncomfortable surfaces.

## 8. Body Language

If you notice your cat obsessively cleaning her paws, limping or favoring one leg, please investigate—it might require veterinary attention.

## 9. It's in the Genes

Most cats don't suffer from foot problems, but doing a little research to find out what issues your kitty's breed is susceptible to can be a great help in keeping her feet healthy.

## 10. Do Not Declaw

Declawing is a surgery that involves the amputation of the end of a cat's toes and causes significant pain during recovery. Please honor your cat's need to scratch by providing scratching posts, clipping her nails regularly and researching other ways to help manage destructive scratching.

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**Source:** <http://www.aspca.org/pet-care/cat-care/top-ten-paw-care-tips>