

# First Aid For Scratching of People

When the path to training is intimidating and you need help now, urgent care gives you a solid start.

1

## TRIAGE AND TREAT

Contact your doctor when needed.

2

## MITIGATE DAMAGE

Use physical barriers to protect yourself.

3

## PREVENT REINJURY

Limit the potential for more damage. Trim nails, use nail caps, or restrict access.

## Triage the injury, treat as needed

Take a deep breath and step out of the situation. Assess the injury; consult your doctor if necessary. Bite wounds should always be seen by a doctor and often need antibiotics. Clean the area with soap and water right away.

## Mitigate damage with protection

Dress with sharp surprises in mind, protecting what your cat likes to attack most. Plan to wear socks, shoes, pants rather than shorts, long sleeves, etc.

Keep a cool head and watch body language closely. This helps you to catch changes in mood and notice if scratching is motivated by play or fear. Being well protected lets you react calmly to incidents and train in the moment.

## Prevent reinjury

Toys can be used to change the focus. Keep stashes where scratching tends to occur. Toss small toys across the room for a diversion that puts distance between you and your kitty. Big toys are good targets for intense wrestlers.

Collars with bells on them help to disable sneakiness. When you hear the jingle, have toy and treat options ready to go before you become the target.

Trim claws to dull the nail and stop snags. Nail caps add another level of protection. Visit a vet or groomer if you are not comfortable trying at home.

Provide a scratching sanctuary. Allow free access and seclude your kitty in sanctuary when needed, such as when contact with kids or other at-risk people cannot be well supervised. Make sure that they have everything they need and want, including ample enrichment. The key word is **sanctuary**.

## Why not punish?

**Punishment can escalate things.**

If your kitty is trying to play, punishment may be seen as your participation. If they think you are in on the game, rough play may increase or become more intense with time.

**Punishment can be scary.**

Teaching your cat to stay away from your hands and feet with punishment can cause a fear of handling. This can make simple things, like nail trims and medicating, extra scary in the future.

**Punishing fear only makes it worse.**

There are many reasons that cats scratch. Your kitty may be scratching to defend itself or out of frustration. Punishing this will increase anxiety and is not humane.

