
Keep That Kitty Busy

Just like our dogs, cats require enrichment. Many unwanted behaviors such as chasing your ankles, climbing up the curtains, or scratching the carpet, can stem from boredom. Just like people, cats need to keep their minds and bodies sharp. Providing your cat with ample opportunities for both mental and physical exercise can make all the difference in creating a healthy bond between the two of you.

Bring in the Toys

Pick up interactive toys from the pet store or even create a cardboard jungle for your cat's hunting amusement. Having a variety of toys that you rotate out periodically can help keep them interesting and engaging to your cat.

When choosing toys, think of your cat's personality, age, physical condition, and play style. Some cats may prefer to chase things in the air, or an item that rolls across the floor. Toys that move on their own or make noise may be fun and exciting to one cat and be scary for another.

- Cat dancers and wands featuring dangling feathers or toys on a string are popular interactive playthings. Try making the toy imitate your cat's prey – feather toys can fly and soar through the air like a bird, while toys on a string can mimic small rodents on the ground.
- Toys that you can throw and roll help awaken a cat's instinct to hunt and chase.
- Catnip and other cat safe scents, like rosemary, can make an ordinary scratching post, toy, or even a sock much more interesting.

Always make sure your cat is focusing on toys and appropriate objects (like scratching posts) during playtime. Make sure to let them catch the toy periodically to avoid frustration and over arousal. Wind down the play by gradually slowing and decreasing your movements. When play time is over, put the interactive toys away. This not only keeps your cat safe from potentially ingesting pieces of the toy, it allows them to distinguish when play time begins and ends. Having a play session before their meal can also help fulfill their instinct to hunt and catch prey before eating.

It's All About Food

Food puzzles are fantastic and simple solutions to increase your cat's mental enrichment. Treat balls and wobblers can turn their dry food into a mentally stimulating game and licki-mats for wet food can not only provide mental enrichment but also make mealtimes last longer. You can also use homemade options such as egg cartons or toilet paper rolls.