

Feline Environmental Enrichment

How to ensure that your feline friend feels safe, happy and comfortable in your home



To make breakfast or dinner time more engaging, try...

- Hiding treats around the house when you are away
- Alternating textures of treats and food
- Creating a food puzzle by placing kibble inside an empty bottle, or poking holes into a shoe box filled with food

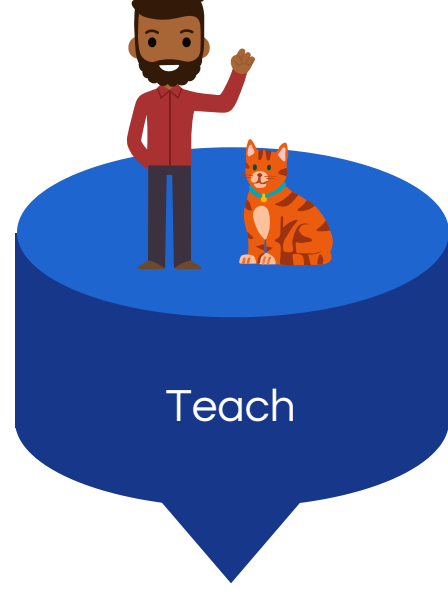
Remember, treats should not make up more than 10% of your cat's daily caloric intake.

Like us, cats love a good place to sleep. Here are some ways to provide your cat a comfortable place to sleep and hide.

Cardboard boxes, empty baskets and bins make wonderful sleeping and hiding places. For bedding, use soft materials such as blankets and unused pillows. Catnip can be sprinkled near these locations to encourage relaxation. Place some of these resting spots near windows, and others in quiet, calm areas of your home.

Playtime nurtures a healthy, mutual bond with your feline friend. To start, try playing with your cat for 15 minutes at a time, with a daily goal of 60 minutes per day.

Choose toys that stimulate your cat's hunting senses — furry, auditory or mobile toys imitate prey. You can make your own "mouse" by attaching a sock to a lanyard, and tugging it along the floor to mimic a mouse's movement. Gentle tugging as the toy is in mid-air will mimic a bird.



Teach

Cats are impressively smart! Teaching your cat tricks is one way to strengthen your bond.

Use positive reinforcement by pairing a gentle command with a reward, such as a small treat.

Some tricks you could try are...

- Sit: Hold a treat in your hand and direct the treat upwards from their chest to just above their head to encourage the sitting position.
- Shake a paw: Gently lift your cat's paw while they are in a sitting position and immediately reward them with a treat.

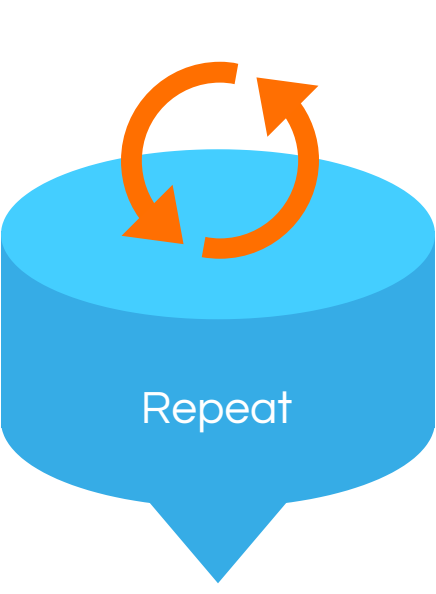
Repeat these motions until your cat responds appropriately.



Health

It is important to note that enrichment includes keeping your cat healthy.

- If possible, bring your cat for yearly veterinary appointments and vaccines.
- Provide appropriate food and safe shelter for your cat, especially if they roam outdoors.
- Spay or neuter your cats to prevent unplanned litters and to avoid potential health complications associated with intact cats, such as mammary cancer and pyometra (infection of the uterus).



Repeat

The most important part of enriching your cat's environment is to be consistent.

Make these changes as part of a longterm plan to enrich your cat's surroundings, improve their quality of life and to strengthen your bond.

SOURCES:
- Ohio State University: <https://indoorpet.osu.edu/cats/basic-indoor-cat-needs>
- SPCA: <https://spca.bc.ca/news/keeping-your-kitty-happy-how-cat-enrichment-helps-felines-stay-healthy/>
- VIN: <https://veterinarypartner.vin.com/default.aspx?pid=19239&catId=102901&id=9956352>
- Feeding Cats & Dogs (Life Stage Nutrition), by Tammy J. Owens DVM, MS, DACVN. Small Animal Clinical Nutrition. University of Saskatchewan. Slide 5.