



ALLEY CAT RESCUE

AN ALLIANCE FOR CAT PROTECTION

P.O. BOX 96449 WASHINGTON DC 20007 • 301 277 5595 • ACR@SAVEACAT.ORG

Tips for Entertaining Indoor Cats

Many cat parents choose to keep their cats indoors. While cats may have originated outdoors, they can have a healthy and happy life inside with a stimulating environment. A lively environment will prevent boredom, which can lead to health and behavioral issues such as obesity, stress related diseases, and destruction of furniture. Behavioral issues are the number one reason guardians relinquish their companion animals. If you notice your cat is under-stimulated, providing her with entertainment is a great way to keep her happy and in the home.

The good news is that it can be easy and fun to keep your cat entertained! Here are some tips:

Provide your cat a window perch. The outdoors is basically cat TV. Buy a window perch or place a scratching post against the window so your cat can watch the outdoors. You can also create a whole outdoor patio or porch area for your cat. Make sure the catio is fully enclosed so she cannot escape. This allows her to see, hear, and feel the outdoors while staying safe. Also make sure no toxic plants are on or near the catio. (You can check out plants that are toxic to cats [here](#).) Hang a bird feeder outside the window or catio; this makes the cat TV even more interesting and allows her to watch the local wildlife.

Provide your cat interactive toys. Playing with your cat is a great way to form or solidify a bond. Cat wands are an easy toy that you can make yourself and ones that can entertain your cat for hours. Laser pointers are also a cat favorite. Just make sure not to point the laser directly into the cat's eyes. You can also buy battery-operated toys that will move around on their own and keep your cat entertained while you are gone. There are many battery-operated toys on the market including mice with wheels to move around the floor and string toys that sway back and forth.

Upcycle to your cats. Oftentimes cats love the simplest and cheapest toys the best. Cardboard boxes and large paper bags are great options for cat toys; avoid plastic bags as they can be a choking hazard. Wad small pieces of newspaper and toss them to your cat for a fun game of baseball or hang old shoelaces from door knobs.

Make them work for their snacks. If your cats love treats or catnip, a food puzzle can be a great way to encourage their natural hunting behaviors in a healthy way. Fill toys with treats, so cats have to figure out how to retrieve the reward.

Rotate cat toys. If a toy is always around, your cat may become bored with it. Instead of having all toys out at once, rotate what toys are available for your cat to play with. This ensures that she is exposed to new and exciting things.

Use scratching posts and shelves to create space. Many cats feel comfortable up high. Create space for them to climb vertically for a fun way for them to play. Vertical space can also be useful in multi-cat homes where a cat may want a spot that provides her with more privacy. You can buy tall cat trees with differing perches or create a unique space using an old bookshelf and cat beds.

Consider adopting another cat. First, assess your cat's personality to decide if they would do well with a buddy. Some cats may prefer to be the only cat in the home and adopting another cat can cause more stress. If your cat welcomes the company of other cats, adding a friend could be a great way for them to have companionship when you are gone. You also get to save another cat's life which is a perk within itself!

Provide your cat with plenty of playtime when you're home. Play with your cat when you are home to release her energy. Work on tiring her out while you are home, so she's less likely to be bored and more likely to relax while you are away.

Walk your cat! Walking on a leash isn't just a dog's game. Cats can be trained to leash walk. Just keep in mind that each cat is different; some may take to walking on a leash rather quickly, while others may require longer training. Leash training is best done when the cat is young, so it becomes a familiar concept for your cat. Teaching your cat to walk on a leash can be a worthwhile way to engage her with the outside world.