



Feline Enrichment

Feline enrichment is a relatively new concept as more and more people are keeping cats inside to keep them safe and healthy. Cats need outlets for natural behaviours and may exhibit undesirable behaviours if outlets are not provided. Cats, like dogs, need daily mental and physical stimulation, and if they are indoor only (which we strongly advise), this stimulation needs to be provided by their humans and environment.

Environmental Enrichment

Cats are natural climbers. They love being in high places where they can see but are not seen. This provides a sense of safety and security as cats are both predators and prey. Cats need their own high and safe place that they can retreat to if they feel threatened or uncomfortable. These can be tall cat trees, high shelves or wall boxes, or window perches. If you are in a multi-cat household, each cat needs their own space – so if you have 3 cats, you need at least 3 high and safe options. The more the better though, as cats love options and love to explore.

Scratching is another natural cat behaviour that needs to be honoured to keep cats happy and healthy. If you do not want them scratching your carpet or furniture, you **MUST** provide them with alternatives. Try to find the texture your cat prefers or provide them with a variety of options like carpet, loose cloth, cardboard and/or rope material. Cats need access to vertical and horizontal scratching options that span the entire length of the cat, from the tip of their front toes to the back of their back toes. Cats like being able to stretch while scratching and some prefer scratching 'up' (vertical) while others prefer scratching 'across' (horizontal). Scratching is also another form of 'marking territory' as there are scent glands on their feet, so if they are scratching your furniture, try adding a scratch post or tree beside the furniture.

Cats love to bird watch! Window perches are great for this, but you can also place cat trees or furniture around the windows. Bonus points if you install a bird feeder around their favourite windows!

Providing lots of self-play toys also helps enrich a cat's environment. Cat toys can be simple – ping-pong balls, golf balls, wine corks, or they can be more elaborate – mice that squeak when touched, windup toys that vibrate and move and rings with balls inside. Use trial and error to determine your cat's personal preferences, and make sure to have a wide variety of toys for them to enjoy. Try to change up the toys every few days so your cat can experience all the toys like they are new each time.

Food Enrichment

Cats are natural hunters; in the wild, they would be hunting for around 6 hours a day and eating approximately 10 small meals per day. Food enrichment is a great way to stimulate the 'hunt' and help satisfy a cat's natural instincts. Some ideas for food enrichment include stuffing food or treats in a toilet

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paper roll and hiding them around the house for the cats to find, prefab food puzzles from pet stores, trick training for food, and snuffle mats.

Hunting Enrichment

Cats love the whole 'hunting' process, the stalking, chasing, catching and finally, the eating. It is important to provide daily opportunities for cats to engage in this hunting behaviour. Wand toys are great for simulating prey and there is a wide variety of options to choose from. Cats generally have a 'prey preference' meaning some prefer flying prey, and others prefer grounded prey. Try to find a toy that matches their preference to get the best engagement.

Begin the play session by slowly moving the toy around and wait until you have the cat's attention. Once she is actively watching, you can move it around more quickly and start moving it around corners and onto surfaces the cat is allowed on. As the cat learns the 'movement' of the 'prey,' she will start following it around, at this point you can start moving the wand more drastically to simulate the 'chase.' Stay in the 'chase phase' for a couple of minutes, then let her 'catch' and bite the toy. This final bite signifies the end of the cycle, and that the cat has completed the hunt. It is immensely satisfying for the cat and is a great stress reducer. Try and do this once or twice per day for 10-15 minutes each time.

Trick Training

Trick training is a great bonding and stimulating experience for cats. It is a great form of mental stimulation and a great outlet for some energy. For more information, please refer to the 'Trick Training' resource.

Games for Cats!

Thanks to Friskies cat owners now have 3 FREE interactive games you can download for your cat this winter season. These games are sure to produce hours of entertainment and stimulation. Download games at <http://gamesforcats.com/>.

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