

Fun Feline Enrichment

Enrichment offers ongoing opportunities for cats to express themselves in species-specific ways that are beneficial to their physical and emotional health.

Check out a variety of enrichment ideas to incorporate into your cat's home life that stimulate both body and brain through happy activity and healthy pursuits.

High Hideouts

- Cats like to climb and hang out up high, so be sure to include elevated feline furniture, such as cat trees, shelving, perches, towers, and human furniture that the cat can use as well.
- High hideouts increase the square footage of the cat's living space.
- Several high-rise hangouts can also offer a vertical "highway" of sorts for the cat to safely view their surroundings and navigate their living space.

Happy Hideaways

- Cats also like to den down in cavernous, hidden, enclosed spaces.
- Options that allow the cat to go "underground" include covered cat beds, feline furniture with hidden cubbies, and cat tunnels.
- Turn the cat's carrier into a desirable den by keeping the door open, putting comfortable bedding inside, feeding meals nearby or inside, and randomly dropping treats and toys in, to make it their frequently used "purr-niture" place.
- Create DIY kitty caverns with cardboard boxes. The box may be open on one side and sitting upright for the cat to jump in, or turned on its side for easy entry.
- For cave-like exploration, seal the box, cutting entry and exit areas allowing free movement in and out. Multiple boxes can be taped together, with their openings interconnected for added feline fun.

Play Variety

- Cats benefit from having a variety of toys that are rotated on a regular basis to keep the novelty and interest level high.
- Toy types to provide include independent toys that are self-activated by the cat, such as crinkle balls, or electronic toys programmed to move in prey-like ways.
- Engage in interactive play with cats using wand-type toys with feathers on the end. This keeps their claws and teeth off your skin.

Cat TV

- Cats are keen on watching interesting aspects of their environment, with an important part of the predatory hunt being the ability to eye and visually stalk their prey. Watching “prey” move about provides a mental workout for the cat, even if they aren’t physically moving.
- Visual entertainment can include a perch placed so the cat can view outdoor wildlife activity. Add a bird feeder just outside the window so that the cat’s perch allows easy viewing.
- Indoors, some cats enjoy watching fish swim inside a closed-top tank or an enclosure with insects such as crickets inside.

Heat Seeking

- A cat’s ideal body temperature is slightly above our own. Thus cats continually seek out sources of heat; and often lie atop air vents, radiators, and laptops.
- Better, safer ways exist that allow the cat access to their own heated spaces, including:
 - 🐾 Placing beds and elevated cat spaces near skylights and windows that allow the cat access to the warmth of sunbeams.
 - 🐾 Placing heated pet beds, mats, and pads in areas the cat already likes to rest. Or, in a pinch, warm up a towel in the dryer and set out for the cat to lie on.

Fresh Water

- Most cats prefer fresh, flowing water over stagnant sources.
- Offer cats various sources of running water, such as fountains that flow with fresh streams or drops of circulated water.

Eating

- Opt for mental challenges at mealtimes through mock hunts that challenge the cat to use their mind and body to catch their food.
- Cats can become highly skilled at “hunting” and foraging for their food in active ways that include feeding meals through food puzzles, cavity toys, and foraging mats. The challenge can be increased or decreased depending on the cat’s ability level and persistence. Take care not to cause the cat to get frustrated. As with all enrichment, what is enjoyable for one individual might be frustrating or boring for another. Find what your cat enjoys. Both kibble and soft food dispensers are available and DIY versions also exist.



Safer Outside Exploration

- 🐾 For social, outgoing cats, consider outside walks or hikes equipped with a feline-specific harness and leash they’re trained to use indoors before venturing outside.
- 🐾 Offer safe outside time in catios that are enclosed on all sides to allow the cat protected time outdoors.
- 🐾 Fencing can also be modified with cat-specific toppers that serve to keep the cat in (though these pose a risk of wildlife getting in).

Mother Nature’s Garden

- 🐾 Plant and grow cat-safe plants, such as catnip and cat grass, that allow the cat to graze directly off the plant itself.
- 🐾 Dried catnip produces feelings of euphoria in certain cats and can be given directly or placed in bedding and toys.
- 🐾 Silvertop is another prized plant with feel-good effects similar to catnip. It’s found in different varieties and strengths, including a stick that cats can chew on when supervised.
- 🐾 Honeysuckle wood, while sometimes tricky to find, is another enjoyable chew cats can enjoy when supervised.