

CATS AND KITTENS: Kitty Boredom and Interactive Play



Cat waking you up in the middle of the night? Is your cat acting depressed or bored? Try these simple solutions for a happier, healthier household.

A **variety of toys** gives your cat something to do when he's home alone. Pay attention to the type of toys he prefers – does he like mylar “crunchy” balls? Or does he prefer feather-type toys? It's also important to rotate these toys often to keep his mind active.

Interactive play sessions can make a huge difference, preferably two sessions per day. Encourage your cat to “hunt” a feather toy or fishing rod-type toy. Let him chase it and leap through the air, then end each session with his favorite treat to mimic a successful hunting experience. These play sessions are especially important right before your bedtime, but don't encourage him to play with your hands or on your bed, or you may be in for a rude awakening at 2 a.m.

Perches near windows give your cat an exciting view of the outside world. Think cat trees, shelves, and other vertical platforms.

Puzzle feeders are a creative way to encourage your cat to forage for his food. Search the internet for inexpensive ideas to engage your cat. Pet stores also carry puzzle feeders.

Cat grass or cat nip can be a fun treat. Many plants are toxic to cats, so be sure to get cat-friendly grass. Pet stores sell cat grass, or you can even grow your own. Oats and wheat are common cat grass seeds, and there are plenty of websites to help guide you.

Adopt a buddy for your cat. Sometimes having a friend can make all the difference. Be sure to see our other resource handouts for introducing a new cat to your household.

No matter what you try, it's important to be consistent with your cat's schedule. This means feeding, playtime, and bedtime. The more consistent you are, the more consistent he will be. Encourage good behavior, not naughty behavior. For example, if you encourage your cat to play with your hands he will see them as toys and may attempt to play with them in the middle of the night. Above all else, give lots and love and cuddles to your cat. He could just be craving more affection from you!

MORE RESOURCES AT

hsppr.org/resources



happy tails. happy hearts.™