

## Keeping Your Kitty Busy

Whether you have just adopted a new feline family member, or are fostering a furry friend, it's important to provide any cat with ways for them to entertain themselves –appropriately! If not, you may end up with a cat that follows you around a bit *too much*, a cat that cries for your attention all the time, or one that becomes too rough when they play!

### A. Feeding

Cats evolved to hunt, and they spend the majority of their time outside searching for prey. Did you know a cat is supposed to eat 5-6 tiny meals throughout the day?? They use up a lot of energy searching for those meals! So when they are sitting around your home, eating from a bowl, what do they use their energy for instead?

One of the easiest ways to help a cat burn up their energy in a healthy way is to stop feeding them from a bowl, and let them “hunt” for their prey instead! How can you do this?

1. Split their meal into several small meals –the average adult cat is fed a ½ cup of dry food per day. You can split that into 4 tiny meals of 1/8 cup.
2. Take each portion of the meal and hide it around the home/room where your cat stays. They can sniff it out throughout the day.
3. Or, you can put portions of their food in puzzle feeders. You can find a variety of these in stores or online (just search for ‘Cat Puzzle Feeder’). Some examples are pictured below.

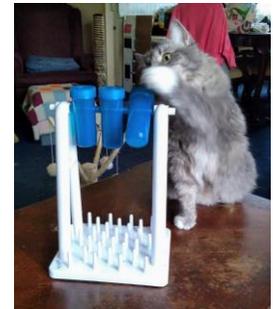


Image 1

4. You can also make your own puzzle feeders from items in your home! Some ideas are:
  - a. An empty plastic bottle with holes poked around it (see Image 1)
  - b. A cardboard tube (like a paper towel or toilet paper tube) with food placed inside and the ends folded in



- c. A muffin tin with food inside, and tennis balls or pieces of cardboard covering the holes (see Image 2)
- d. A Tupperware container with holes cut in the lid –you can put toys inside as well, to make it even trickier to get to the food! (see Image 3)
- e. If you want to get really creative, you can glue several toilet paper tubes onto a large piece of cardboard in a variety of ways, to create different puzzles for your cat to figure out! (see Image 4)

Image 2

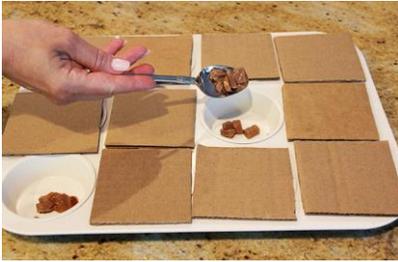


Image 3



Image 4



## B. Playtime!

The other way you can help satisfy your cat's need for action and adventure is simple: by playing with them! It's important not to use your hands and play rough with a cat or kitten, as this teaches them that it's ok to put their teeth on human skin. Instead, use toys that encourage your cat's natural hunting abilities. You can find a variety of toys in pet stores or online.

You can also make some fun toys from everyday items found in your home! Some homemade toy examples are:



1. Kitty Kickers
  - a. Stuff an old sock with newspaper or stuffing (I use stuffing from dog toys that get shredded!) and add a pinch of cat nip in between handfuls of paper/fluff. Tie the end of the sock.

Enjoy! Cats like having something to grab and kick!



## 2. Box Fort

- a. Cats love boxes, and sometimes just setting a cardboard box down in the middle of the room is enough to entice a cat to explore and play in it. If you want to get creative though, take a bunch of boxes, tape them together, and cut holes to make windows/doorways so your cat can have different rooms to explore!

