

How to Play with Your Cat

Why is play important?

- Stress Reduction
 - Play is particularly helpful in alleviating your cat's stress & anxiety when done routinely.
- Preventing Behavior Problems
 - Cats need appropriate outlets for their energy
 - A lack of play can lead to cats lashing out at people and other pets

How do I appropriately play with a cat?

Structure Play Sessions

- Simulating the hunt
 - Create your play sessions to mimic the cat's natural hunting behavior. With a wand toy, simulate a bird—making the toy soar through the air, or simulate a mouse—sliding the toy on the floor in quick, jerky movements. Allow the cat to pounce and catch the toy and bat it around, then start again. End the session by allowing the cat to capture the toy.
- Sessions should be long enough for the cat to get tired (15-20 minutes is usually ideal). After 5 minutes after the end of the session, feed your cat some food. This mimics what would happen at the end of a real hunt – your cat would eat their catch.



Other Toys & Activities

- Be sure to provide plenty of safe toys for your cat and rotate them to make them more interesting.
 - Have a variety of toys with different “uses” – a toy to carry, a toy to roll around, a toy to kick, etc.
- Provide perches with a view. A window with a view of bird activity or squirrels can provide hours of entertainment. An aquarium also makes for interesting “cat TV”.
- Hide your cat's food around the house so they have to hunt for it, instead of putting it in a bowl. Toys that may be stuffed with food are also available at most pet stores.
- Having multiple water sources is also ideal. Provide your cat with several bowls of water. Cats also enjoy running water. Consider purchasing a water fountain. Mounting a few rabbit water bottles in several locations offers another novel opportunity to encourage your cat to drink water while stimulating their mind.



If your cat is exhibiting any behavior concerns, please reach out to Mountain Humane's behavior department.

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