Enrichment & Playtime with My Cat

Most people don’t realize it, but cats need to play! Physical & mental enrichment is important for a happy, healthy, well-balanced kitty. This is even more important for younger cats or kittens – without this outlet, they could develop some behavior problems out of boredom. Cats are natural hunters & need to behave as such!

At a minimum – every cat needs at least two 15 minute interactive play sessions per day.
  - These sessions should be at the same time every day – the more consistent you are with your cat’s daily routine, the more confident they are & the happier they are!
  - These sessions involve you actively playing with your cat with things like a laser pointer or a feather wand.
    - Enticing toy movement is another fundamental aspect of playtime. Thinking about how prey would act in the wild when moving a toy will help create enticing and irresistible movements.
    - You should not dangle the toy in front of the cat’s face; no type of prey would ever present itself to a cat. Instead, the toy should be moved away from him/her. Movements should be random and change direction unpredictably. This will keep a cat attentive and prevent him/her from losing interest.

In between these sessions, your cat should have access to solo toys & they should be switched out every few days so he/she does not get bored of them.
  - Some solo toys to keep around the house are:
    - Toy mice
    - Paper balls
    - Plush toys
  - If your cat really enjoys catnip – sprinkle some on these toys every few days.

If you want to further excite your kitty, try an interactive solo toy! Such as:
  - Automatic Cat Laser Toy
  - Swimming Robot Fish Toys
  - Petmate Butterfly
  - SmartyKat Electronic Motion Cat Toys

There are also more thought-provoking toys to occupy your cat & make them work for their food! Such as:
  - Food puzzles
  - Interactive feeders
  - Go Fish Slow Feeder

Every kitty household absolutely needs feline furniture, as well! Some feline furniture to have:
  - Cat trees (at least 6 ft high) – this is a must!
    - Cats love to observe from high up & the more vertical space they have, the bigger their “territory” is, which is so important to a cat!
    - It also gives them a place to go that’s out of reach if they’re feeling overwhelmed by other pets, children, or visitors.
    - Set it up by the window so your kitty can get some extra enrichment watching the birds!
- **Scratching posts – this is a must!**
  - Without these, your furniture will definitely suffer! Scratching is a natural behavior & cannot be trained out of a cat, we just need to give them options to perform this behavior!
- **Shelving**
- **Cat cubbies/hideaways**
  Another fun activity to do with your cat is **clicker training!**
- **Some fun tricks you can train your cat to do are:**
  - Sit
  - High Five
  - Come

Finally, if you’re feeling extra adventurous – you can give your cat some safe, outdoor time! We only recommend this in two ways:
- **Install a catio space!** Check out this site on how to do that: [https://catiospaces.com/](https://catiospaces.com/)
- **Leash training** – this involves training your cat to wear a harness & leash and taking them out for a stroll! You should only try this if it seems like your cat wants to go outside.
  - It can take time for a cat to acclimate to a harness/leash – take it slow & follow these directions: [https://www.jacksongalaxy.com/blog/leashwalk-my-cat-ask-the-cat-daddy/](https://www.jacksongalaxy.com/blog/leashwalk-my-cat-ask-the-cat-daddy/)