



Enhance Your Cat's Playtime With These 7 Sensory Enrichment Activities

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Authored by: Nutro Pet Food

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Although it's normal for your cat to sleep their way through much of the day, they also need adequate playtime to help sharpen their feline senses. Sensory enrichment can help reinforce your cat's natural behaviors and potentially fend off a range of health problems. The key is to focus on activities that cater to your cat's instincts: hunting, climbing, perching and pouncing. Read on to learn about the benefits of sensory enrichment for cats, as well as seven ways you can energize your cat's daily routine.

What Is Sensory Enrichment For Cats?

To begin with, it's not as simple as buying a few pet toys and leaving them out for your cat. Sensory enrichment is described as implementing one or more factors to improve the physical and psychological welfare of your cat. And that essentially means changing your

cat's environment with healthy stimuli.

Why Is Sensory Enrichment Important?

Especially for indoor cats, it's vital to find ways to nurture healthy behavior and reduce the possibility of abnormal behavior like biting or excessive vocalization. Effective enrichment also makes your home a more positive space for your cat and increases their ability to cope with challenges, including the introduction of a baby, new cat or other animal.

7 Fun Sensory Enrichment Ideas For Cats

Now for the good stuff: how to provide sensory enrichment for your cat. There are a lot of strategies and techniques you can use, which is great for keeping things fresh if you regularly introduce a new one.



1. Toys To Chase And Pounce

The right toys can be very effective, such as those that mimic prey and their actions. This kind of movement and sound sparks your cat's instincts to chase and pounce. It's important to provide toys that your cat can catch. On the other hand, something like a laser pointer is not a good choice because your cat can't catch anything and finish the hunt — leading to frustration that can elicit negative behaviors.

2. Food To Hunt

Novel feeding methods can encourage search and capture behaviors that aren't triggered by setting a prepared meal on the floor. Try hiding small amounts of dry food around the house to prompt your cat's need to search and hunt. Puzzle feeders are a great way to promote hunting behaviors and provide cognitive stimulation.

3. Vertical Structures To Climb

You've seen how your cat will investigate just about anything new in your home. Switching things up in your cat's physical environment can make a big impact. Vertical features such as shelves, ropes and cat trees support climbing and jumping behaviors and provide the comfort and security of being off the ground. They offer your cat spatial complexity and give them the opportunity to rest and retreat at different heights.

4. Hiding Spaces

You can easily make a hiding box with holes that allows your cat to control their exposure to the outside. And if you wall in the area on top of the box, they benefit from a raised vantage point while staying hidden. This gives your cat a greater sense of control and security, and helps lower any stress they're feeling.

5. Sights, Sounds And Smells

If your cat enjoys a window view, you know the value it adds to their day. If your cat doesn't have a window, plenty of online videos and streaming channels provide audiovisual

elements intriguing to cats, from prey animals to friendly felines. As for sense of smell, catnip still reigns supreme as the most enticing odor. And synthetic pheromones have proven to be a useful enrichment tool for calming anxious or fearful cats.

6. The Great Outdoors

While the outside world offers a wide range of stimuli to satisfy your cat's natural instincts, it also poses numerous risks to their health and safety, as well as to wild prey like your backyard birds and squirrels. Still, with all the behavioral benefits cats can gain through outdoor access, you can compromise by offering your cat an enclosure — [often called a "catio"](#) that provides many of the sights, scents and sounds they crave yet keeps them safe from harm and protects wildlife.

7. Socialization With People And Other Cats

If your cat is strictly indoors, it can be a challenge to provide them with enough sensory enrichment. After all, your home has to accommodate all of your cat's natural behaviors. The key piece of the puzzle is proper socialization. Creating a bond with your cat and socializing them with other people and pets helps build a foundation to ward off behavioral issues. With the right amount of socialization and enrichment, cats can happily live a full life indoors.

Cats are complex. They carry the instincts and behaviors of the countless generations that came before them. Providing your cat with plenty of sensory enrichment ensures the best possible life for you both.

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It's no wonder we refer to dogs as our best friends. They're loyal companions that love to be a part of our routines and hobbies — including some of our favorite outdoor activities. These eight ideas will help strengthen the bond between you and your dog while you both enjoy the great outdoors.

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[Everything You Need To Know About Building A Catio](#)

Catios — or patios for cats — are spaces where cats can safely enjoy the great outdoors. And the good news is that there are lots of ways to build a catio! Your approach mostly depends on how much space you have and what you think your cat would like best. Let's talk about types of catios and explore the elements that make for a successful one.

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8 Tips To Keep Your Dog Active This Winter

The days are getting shorter and the temperature is getting chillier for much of the country — ready or not, winter is on its way! For your dog, the shift of seasons can also mean a change in their activity level. As the cold weather approaches, get creative on planning out some fun winter excursions for your pup. Varying indoor and outdoor dog activities will help keep them engaged and out of mischief — and give you something new to enjoy as well!

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A Guide to Enjoyable and Safe Dog Walking

There's nothing quite like the excitement of grabbing the leash and heading out the door with your dog. The wagging tail, the eager barks, and the sparkle in their eyes are all testaments to the joy that dog walking brings. But dog walking is more than just a fun activity – it's a crucial part of your dog's overall well-being. So, how often should you be lacing up those sneakers?

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