



What your cat needs at home



We all have things we need to keep us happy and healthy, things we need to feel safe, things to do so we don't get bored, and things to help us bond with those we love. Your cat has these needs too. Follow these pointers to ensure you're providing everything your cat needs to live their best life at home.

The basics

- ✓ **Food.** Give your cat small amounts frequently including different textures and flavours. Challenge yourself to avoid using a boring bowl – instead encourage your cat to use their brain and their hunting skills. Try scatter feeding, food toys or puzzles.
- ✓ **Water.** Provide water in different bowls and locations and let your cat choose their favourite. Make sure food and water are away from toileting areas. Short on space? Food and water stations don't need to be on the ground – try using shelves, tables, benches.
- ✓ **Scratching posts.** Give your cat scratching surfaces or they will find their own! Horizontal and vertical scratching posts with different surfaces are a must to allow your cat to express natural behaviours, keep their claws healthy, and spread scents that make them feel happy at home.
- ✓ **Toileting areas.** Just like us, cats prefer their toilets to be clean, quiet and private. One cat needs two litter trays that are big enough for them to turn around and squat. For each additional cat, add another tray. Pop the trays in accessible and quiet locations. Cats need to dig, so give them enough litter to do their thing.
- ✓ **Rest spots.** Create comfortable resting spots with soft bedding, preferably up off the ground. They will love you for it.

Give your cat choice. Let your cat decide between at least two resting areas, two feeding areas and two toileting areas.

Spread things out. Place these basics in separate locations so your cat can make use of all available space.

A safe and interesting environment

- 🐾 **Elevated places.** As born climbers, cats need access to elevated places like windowsills, shelves and on top of furniture.
- 🐾 **Hideouts.** Cats need quiet, private, enclosed areas to retreat, rest and sleep. Boxes, shelves, cupboards, underneath a bed or an open cat carrier make great cat hide-outs.
- 🐾 **Sensory environment.** Different things to see, hear, touch, smell and taste make life more fun. Think cat-safe plants, toys that squeak or jangle, interesting views through secure windows. But keep in mind, cats need to be surrounded with their scent-markings to feel at home, so avoid introducing strong external smells like strong cleaning agents that can interfere with your cat's sense of smell.
- 🐾 **Optional outdoors.** Some cats enjoy safe outdoor access like walks on a harness, spending time in a secure outdoor enclosure, or supervised forays in an escape-proof backyard.



Time with family

Cats benefit from regular short periods of gentle interaction with people. Different cats have different preferences, some would prefer just to be in the same room, others love a chat or a pat, a training session, or being brushed. Let your cat initiate, choose and control the type of interaction, always asking their consent lets your cat know they can trust you.

The Consent Test



Step 1:
Wait until your cat comes to you.



Step 2:
Offer your hand and WAIT.



If your cat approaches, smells, or nudges you, try some pats or scratches for a couple of seconds. Return to Step 2 and repeat.



If they stay still or move away, STOP. Give them some space. Try again another time.

Play can benefit cats of any age:

- 🐾 **Keep it movin'!** You can replicate a 'hunting-like' experience by allowing your cat to play with moving treats or toys. Let them catch the item to complete the full sequence of stalk, chase, pounce, catch! Even when you're busy, you can always make time for play because cats usually prefer short sessions (5-10 minutes at a time).
- 🐾 **Mix it up!** Rotate between your cat's favourite toys, toys they can paw or chew or jump for on a rod, balls to chase, and soft toys they can bite.

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