



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, frequent meals with varied textures and flavours. Instead of a standard food bowl, make mealtime mentally stimulating by encouraging natural hunting behaviours. Try scatter feeding, interactive food puzzles, or treat dispensing toys to support your cats physical health and emotional wellbeing.
- Water.** Give your cat plenty of choices, place water in multiple bowls around the house and let them pick their favourite spot. Keep food and water stations away from litter areas for a clean, comfy setup. Limited space? Get creative! Elevate bowls on shelves, tables or benches. Consider a cat fountain - many cats love sipping from a flowing stream!
- Scratching posts.** Give your cat scratching surfaces or they will find their own! Horizontal and vertical scratching posts that allow your cat to do a complete full body stretch are essential. Try different substrates such as cardboard, sisal rope or carpet, and position them near your cats favourite areas such as next to couches, beds and sunny windows. Use catnip or drag a string toy around them to encourage use. Scratching posts allow cats 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 clean, quiet and undisturbed spaces for their toileting needs. One cat needs two litter trays that are 1.5x times their body length, making it big enough for them to turn around and squat. For each additional cat, add another tray. Cats need to dig, so give them enough litter to fulfill their instincts.
- 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.

- 🐾 **Rest spot.** Offer soft, elevated spots so your cat can lounge off the ground and feel secure. Did you know that cats need to sleep between 12-14hrs per day! To ensure adequate sleep for your cats emotional and physical health, make a family rule not to disturb your cat when they are resting in these spots.
- 🐾 **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.
- 🐾 **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 smells like cleaning agents, air fresheners, candles, essential oils and other strong smelling items that can interfere with your cat's sense of smell and sense of security.

- 🐾 **Optional outdoors.** Every cat benefits from the choice to safely access the outdoors. Consider enclosing a backyard, balcony or patio with cat safe netting. Alternatively, try supervised time outside or attaching a cat enclosure to an entry/ exit point of the home such as a door or window. Some cats may enjoy walking on a harness in the backyard if introductions are positive and completed in a gradual manner. Remember that it is important that they always have the choice to return to their safe places inside the home.

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 is essential for cats of every 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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