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Cat Specialty Virtual Classes



Introducing Your New Kitten or Cat to a Resident Pet

\$25 for 1-Hour Class

In this one-hour class, learn how being proactive with proven methods can help introductions be as stress free as possible.



Counter Surfing and Other Unwanted Cat Behaviors

\$25 for 1-Hour Class

Learn how to teach and reinforce alternative behaviors that will keep your cat away from unsafe or unwanted locations.



Feline Enrichment Class

\$25 for 1-Hour Class

Cats require cat-specific activities and resources to satiate their curiosity and provide mental stimulation. Learn ways to eliminate boredom and keep your cat happily satisfied.



Cat Carrier, Car Ride and Vet Visit – Oh My!

\$25 for 1-Hour Class

Learn how you can change your cat's negative association with the dreaded cat carrier and subsequent car ride to the vet's office. You, your cat and your vet will all appreciate your knowledge and skills.



Adventures With Your Cat

\$25 for 1-Hour Class

Hiking, camping, and walking with our cats has become popular in the Pacific NW. Learn how to help your cat feel comfortable, wear a harness, stay safe, and more.

Additional Virtual Classes



Virtual Kitten-Garden Class

\$95 for 4 weeks of training

Impress your friends when you show them how your cat will sit for a treat. Not only will you learn this and other tricks, you will also learn how to help your kitten be a well-adjusted cat. By learning how to make a car ride less scary, nail trims stress free and other useful tips, you can help to prepare your kitten for a better adulthood. For kittens 6 months and younger.



Virtual Private Training for Cats

\$85 Consultation, \$225 for 3 sessions

During a one-on-one consultation, we'll review your unique situation and help you discover solutions to fit your specific needs. We can help you with litter box issues, fearful behavior, preparing your cat for a baby, issues with cat and kids living together, or problems with multi-cat households.



Training & Behavior

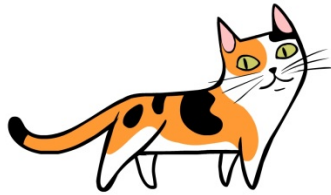
Portland Campus (503) 285-7722

Salem Campus (503) 585-5900

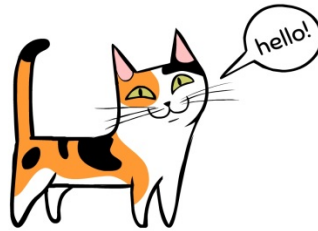
More class information:

oregonhumane.org/train-your-pet

CAT LANGUAGE



INTERESTED



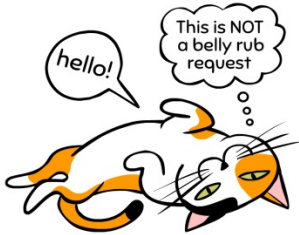
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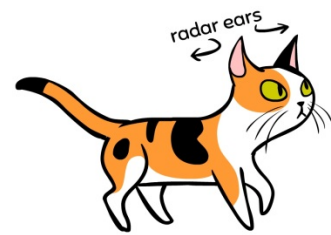
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FRIENDLY, RELAXED



CONTENT



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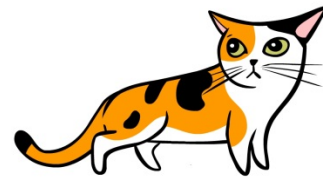
PLAYFUL



EXCITED



"THIS IS MINE"



ANXIOUS



PREDATORY



WORRIED



FRIGHTENED



THREATENED



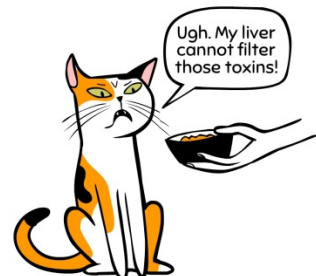
TERRIFIED



SUPER TERRIFIED



IRRITATED



DISGUSTED



Introducing Your New Cat to Your Resident Pets

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It's important to maintain realistic expectations when introducing a new cat to a resident pet and to be patient. Cats need to feel safe in their environment to be happy and relaxed, so maximizing their sense of safety will go a long way during their introductions. Going slowly will help cats gain trust faster than forcing the situation. Some cats are more social than other cats. For example, an eight-year-old cat who has never been around other animals may never learn to share her territory (and her people) with other pets in the household. However, an eight-week-old kitten separated from her mom and littermates for the first time might prefer to have a cat or dog companion. Cats are territorial and need to be introduced to other animals slowly in order to give them time to get used to each other before there is a face-to-face confrontation. Slow introductions help prevent fearful and aggressive problems from developing. **PLEASE NOTE:** When you introduce pets to each other, one of them may send "play" signals which can be misinterpreted by the other pet. If those signals are interpreted as aggression by one animal, then you should handle the situation as "aggressive."

Confinement

Confine your new cat to one medium-sized room with her litter box, food, water, toys, scratching post and a bed. Feed your resident pets and the newcomer on each side of the door to this room. This will help all of them to associate something enjoyable (eating!) with each other's smells. Don't put the food so close to the door that the animals are too upset by each other's presence to eat. Gradually move the dishes closer to the door until your pets can eat calmly, directly on either side of the door. Next, use two doorstops to prop open the door just enough to allow the animals to see each other, and repeat the whole process.

Swap Scents

Switch sleeping blankets or beds between your new cat and your resident animals so they have a chance to become accustomed to each other's scent. Rub a towel on one animal and put it underneath the food dish of another animal. You should do this with each animal in the house.

Switch Living Areas

Once your new cat is using her litter box and eating regularly while confined, let her have free time in the house while confining your other animals to the new cat's room. This switch provides another way for the animals to experience each other's scents without a face-to-face meeting. It also allows the newcomer to become familiar with her new surroundings without being frightened by the other animals.

Avoid Fearful or Aggressive Meetings

Avoid any interactions between your pets that result in either fearful or aggressive behavior. If these responses are allowed to become a habit, they can be difficult to change. It's better to introduce your pets to each other so gradually that neither animal becomes afraid or aggressive. You can expect mild forms of these behaviors, but don't give them the opportunity to intensify. If either animal becomes fearful or aggressive, separate them, and start over with the introduction process in a series of very small, gradual steps, as outlined above.

Resources

Cats love having multiple resources available to them. This can mean access to several litter boxes, food and water in various locations, lots of toys, ample, safe resting spots and interactive time with you can all increase the chances that a multiple-cat household will remain peaceful.

Precautions

If one of your pets has a medical problem or is injured, this could stall the introduction process. Check with your veterinarian to be sure that all of your pets are healthy. You'll also want to have at least one litter box per cat, and you'll probably need to clean all of the litter boxes more frequently. Make sure that none of your cats is being ambushed or bullied by another while trying to get to the litter box or actually using it. Try to keep your resident pets' schedules as close as possible to what it was before the newcomer's appearance.

If spats do occur between your cats, you shouldn't attempt to intervene directly to separate the cats. Instead, make a loud noise, throw a pillow or towel or use a squirt bottle with water to separate the cats. Give them a chance to calm down before re-introducing them to each other. Be sure each cat has a safe hiding place.

Cat to Dog Introductions

You'll need to be very careful with cat and dog introductions. A dog can injure or kill a cat very easily, even if they're only playing. All it takes is one shake and the cat's neck can break. Some dogs have such a high prey drive they should never be left alone with a cat. Dogs usually want to chase and play with cats, and cats usually become afraid and defensive. Use the techniques described above to begin introducing your new cat to your resident dog. In addition:

Practice Obedience

If your dog doesn't already know the commands "sit," "down," "come" and "stay," you should begin working on them. Small pieces of food will increase your dog's motivation to perform, which will be necessary in the presence of such a strong distraction as a new cat. Even if your dog already knows these commands, work with obeying commands in return for a tidbit.

Control Meetings

After your new cat and resident dog have become comfortable eating on opposite sides of the door, and have been exposed to each other's scents as described above, you can attempt a face-to-face introduction in a controlled manner. Put your dog's leash on and, using treats, have him either sit or lie down and stay. Have another family member or friend enter the room and quietly sit down next to your new cat, but don't have them physically restrain her. Have this person offer your cat some special pieces of food or catnip. At first, the cat and the dog should be on opposite sides of the room. Lots of short visits are better than a few long visits. Don't drag out the visit so long that the dog becomes uncontrollable. Repeat this step several times until both the cat and dog are tolerating each other's presence without fear, aggression or other undesirable behaviors.

Let Your Cat Go

Next, allow your cat freedom to explore your dog at her own pace, with the dog still on-leash and in a "down-stay." Meanwhile, keep giving your dog treats and praise for his calm behavior. If your dog gets up from his "stay" position, he should be repositioned with a treat lure, and praised and rewarded for obeying the "stay" command. If your cat runs away or becomes aggressive, you're progressing too fast. Go back to the previous introduction steps.

Positive Reinforcement

Although your dog must be taught that chasing or being rough with your cat is unacceptable behavior, he must also be taught how to behave appropriately, and be rewarded for doing so, such as sitting, coming when called, or lying down in return for a treat. If your dog is always punished when your cat is around, and never has "good things" happen in the cat's presence, your dog will become frustrated and may redirect aggression toward the cat.

Directly Supervise All Interactions between Your Dog and Cat

Keep your dog on-leash and with you whenever your cat is free in the house during the introduction process. Be sure that your cat has an escape route and a place to hide. Keep your dog and cat separated when you aren't home until you're certain your cat will be safe.

Precautions

Dogs like to eat cat food. You should keep cat food out of your dog's reach (in a closet or on a high shelf). Eating cat feces is also a relatively common behavior in dogs. Although there are no health hazards to your dog, it's probably distasteful to you. It's also upsetting to your cat to have such an important space as the litter box invaded. Unfortunately, attempts to keep your dog out of the litter box by "booby trapping" will also keep your cat away as well. Punishment after the fact will not change your dog's behavior. The best solution is to place the litter box where your dog can't access it – like behind a baby gate, in a closet with the door anchored open from both sides and just wide enough for your cat, or inside a tall, topless cardboard box with easy access for your cat.

Kittens and Puppies

Because they are so much smaller, kittens are in more danger of being injured or killed by a young energetic dog or by a predatory dog. A kitten will need to be kept separate from an especially energetic dog until she is fully-grown, and even then she should never be left alone with the dog. Usually, a well-socialized cat will be able to keep a puppy in its place, but some cats don't have enough confidence to do this. If you have a shy cat, you might need to keep her separated from your puppy until he matures enough to have more self-control.

When to Get Help

If introductions don't go smoothly, seek professional help immediately. Animals can be severely injured in fights, and the longer the problem continues, the harder it can be to resolve. Conflicts between pets in the same family can often be resolved with professional help. Punishment won't work, though, and could make things worse.

Oregon Humane Society Behavior Helpline

503-416-2983

Leave a recorded message and OHS will return your call. If you have a medical question, please call your veterinarian. OHS is unable to give medical advice to the public.



Starting Off Right with Your New Cat and the Litter Box

Most cats have a specific preference about where they want to eliminate. By following the suggestions outlined in this handout, you'll be able to start off on the right foot with your new cat.

Location

Most people are inclined to place the litter box in an out-of-the-way spot in order to minimize odor and loose particles of cat litter in the house. Often, the litter box ends up in the basement, sometimes next to an appliance and/or on a cold cement floor. This type of location can be undesirable from your cat's point of view for several reasons.

If you have a kitten or an older cat, she may not be able to get down a long flight of stairs in time to get to the litter box. Since she is new to the household, she may not remember where the litter box is if it's located in an area she seldom frequents. Your cat may be startled while using the litter box if a furnace, washer or dryer suddenly comes on and that may be the last time she'll risk such a frightening experience! If your cat likes to scratch the surface surrounding her litter box, she may find a cold cement floor unappealing.

The litter box should be kept in a location that affords your cat some privacy, but is also conveniently located. If you place the litter box in a closet or a bathroom, be sure the door is wedged open from both sides, in order to prevent her from being trapped in or out. Depending on where it's located, you might consider cutting a hole in a door or adding a cat flap. If the litter box sits on a smooth, slick or cold surface, put a small throw rug underneath the litter box.

Type of Litter

Research has shown that most cats prefer fine-grained litters so that's a good place to begin. Once you find a litter your cat likes, don't change types or brands. Buying whatever brand happens to be on sale could result in your cat not using the litter box.

Many cats are put off by the odor of scented litters. For the same reason, it's not a good idea to place a room deodorizer or air freshener near the litter box. Odor shouldn't be a problem if the litter box is kept clean. If you find the litter box odor offensive, your cat probably finds it offensive and won't want to eliminate there.

Cleaning the Box

To meet the needs of the most discriminating cat the litter box should be scooped at least daily. How often you change the litter depends on the number of cats you have, the number of litter boxes, and the type of litter you use. If you notice an odor or if much of the litter is wet or clumped, it's time for a change. Don't use strong smelling chemicals or cleaning products when washing the litter box, as it may cause your cat to avoid it. Washing with soap and water should be sufficient.

Linens

Some cats don't mind having a liner in the litter box, while others do. Again, you may want to experiment to see if your cat is bothered by a liner in the box. If you do use a liner, make sure it's anchored in place, so it can't easily catch your cat's claws or be pulled out of place.

Depth of Litter

Most cats won't use litter that's more than about two inches deep. In fact, some longhaired cats actually prefer less litter and a smooth, slick surface, such as the bottom of the litter box. You will need to experiment with your

cat to find what she prefers but please remember that the litter box needs to be cleaned on a regular basis and adding extra litter is not a way around that chore.

Number of Litter Boxes

You should have at least as many litter boxes as you have cats. That way, none of them will ever be prevented from eliminating in the litter box because it's already occupied. You might also consider placing them in several locations around the house, so that no one cat can prevent the other cats from accessing it. We also recommend that you place at least one litter box on each level of your house. It's not possible to designate a personal litter box for each cat in your household, as cats will likely use any litter box that's available. Occasionally, a cat may refuse to use the litter box after another cat has used it. In this case, all of the litter boxes will need to be kept extremely clean and additional boxes may be needed.

Size of Litter Boxes

Your cat needs sufficient room to turn around, scratch, dig or position herself in the way she wants. If you had your cat from a kitten, remember to increase the size of the litter box as your kitten grows. Some cats like litter boxes with lower sides and others do fine with deep sides which can help contain the litter better. Your cat needs to be able to easily jump into and out of the litter box so please watch for this and accommodate accordingly as your cat ages.

To Cover or Not To Cover

Some people prefer to use a covered litter box; however, there are some potential problems with using this type of box. You may want to experiment by offering both types at first, to discover what your cat prefers.

Potential Problems

- You may forget to clean the litter box as frequently as you should because the dirty litter is "out of sight - out of mind."
- A covered litter box traps odors inside, so it will need to be cleaned more often than an open one.
- A covered litter box may not allow a large cat sufficient room to turn around, scratch, dig or position herself in the way she wants.
- A covered litter box may also make it easier for another cat to lay in wait and "ambush" the user as he exits the box. On the other hand, a covered litter box may feel more private and may be preferred by some cats.

"Litter-Training" Cats

There's really no such thing as "litter-training" a cat in the same way one would house-train a dog. A cat doesn't need to be taught what to do with a litter box. The only thing you need to do is provide an acceptable, accessible and large enough litter box, using the suggestions above. It's not necessary to take your cat to the litter box and move her paws back and forth in the litter; in fact, we don't recommend it. This may actually be an unpleasant experience for your cat and may initiate a negative association with the litter box.

If Problems Develop

If your cat begins to eliminate in areas other than the litter box, your first call should always be to your veterinarian. Many medical conditions can cause a change in a cat's litter box habits. If your veterinarian determines that your cat is healthy, the cause may be behavioral. Most litter box behavior problems can be resolved by using behavior modification techniques. Punishment is not the answer. For long standing or complex situations, contact an animal behavior specialist who has experience working with cats.

Call our free Pet Behavior Help-Line (503) 416-2983



Cat Toys & How to Use Them

Reprinted with permission from Denver Dumb Friends League.

“Safe” Toys

There are many factors that contribute to the safety or danger of a toy. Many of those factors, however, are completely dependent upon your cat's size, activity level and personal preference. Another factor to be considered is the environment in which your cat spends her time. Although we can't guarantee your cat's enthusiasm or her safety with any specific toy, we can offer the following guidelines.

Be Cautious

The things that are usually the most attractive to cats are often the very things that are the most dangerous. Cat-proof your home by checking for: string, ribbon, yarn, rubber bands, plastic milk jug rings, paper clips, pins, needles, and anything else that could be ingested. All of these items are dangerous, no matter how cute your cat may look when she's playing with them.

Avoid or alter any toys that aren't "cat-proof" by removing ribbons, feathers, strings, eyes, or other small parts that could be chewed and/or ingested.

Soft toys should be machine washable. Check labels for child safety, as a stuffed toy that's labeled as safe for children under three years old, doesn't contain dangerous fillings. Problem fillings include things like nutshells and polystyrene beads. Also, rigid toys are not as attractive to cats.

Toys We Recommend

Active Toys:

- Round plastic shower curtain rings are fun either as a single ring to bat around, hide or carry, or when linked together and hung in an enticing spot.
- Plastic rolling balls, with or without bells inside.
- Ping-Pong balls and plastic practice golf balls with holes, to help cats carry them. Try putting one in a dry bathtub, as the captive ball is much more fun than one that escapes under the sofa. You'll probably want to remove the balls from the bathtub before bedtime, unless you can't hear the action from your bedroom. Two o'clock in the morning seems to be a prime time for this game.
- Paper bags with any handles removed. Paper bags are good for pouncing, hiding and interactive play. They're also a great distraction if you need your cat to pay less attention to what you're trying to accomplish. Plastic bags are not a good idea, as many cats like to chew and ingest the plastic.
- Sisal-wrapped toys are very attractive to cats that tend to ignore soft toys.
- Empty cardboard rolls from toilet paper and paper towels are ideal cat toys, especially if you "unwind" a little cardboard to get them started.

Catnip:

- Catnip-filled soft toys are fun to kick, carry and rub.
- Plain catnip can be crushed and sprinkled on the carpet, or on a towel placed on the floor if you want to be able to remove all traces. The catnip oils will stay in the carpet, and although they're not visible to us, your cat will still be able to smell them.
- Catnip sprays rarely have enough power to be attractive to cats.

- Not all cats are attracted to catnip. Some cats may become over-stimulated to the point of aggressive play and others may be slightly sedated.
- Kittens under six months old seem to be immune to catnip.
- Catnip is not addictive and is perfectly safe for cats to roll in, rub in or eat.

Comfort Toys

- Soft stuffed animals are good for several purposes. For some cats, the stuffed animal should be small enough to carry around. For cats that want to “kill” the toy, the stuffed animal should be about the same size as the cat. Toys with legs and a tail seem to be even more attractive to cats.
- Cardboard boxes, especially those a tiny bit too small for your cat to really fit into.

Get The Most Out Of Toys!

- Rotate your cat's toys weekly by making only four or five toys available at a time. Keep a variety of types easily accessible. If your cat has a huge favorite, like a soft “baby” that she loves to cuddle with, you should probably leave that one out all the time, or risk the wrath of your cat!
- Provide toys that offer a variety of uses - at least one toy to carry, one to “kill,” one to roll and one to “baby.”
- “Hide and Seek” is a fun game for cats to play. “Found” toys are often much more attractive than a toy which is blatantly introduced.



Cats: Destructive Scratching

Reprinted with permission from Denver Dumb Friends League.

Although some people think a cat's scratching behavior is a reflection of her distaste for a couch's upholstery, a not-so-subtle hint to open the drapes, or a poorly conceived Zorro impersonation, the fact is that cats scratch objects in their environment for many perfectly normal reasons.

Why do Cats Scratch?

Cats scratch for many reasons, including:

- To remove the dead outer layer of their claws.
- To mark their territory by leaving both a visual mark and a scent—they have scent glands on their paws.
- To stretch their bodies and flex their feet and claws.
- To work off energy.

Because scratching is a normal behavior and one that cats are highly motivated to display, it's unrealistic to try to prevent them from scratching. Instead, the goal in resolving scratching problems is to redirect the scratching onto acceptable objects.

Training your Cat to Scratch Acceptable Objects

You must provide objects for scratching that are appealing, attractive, and convenient from your cat's point of view. Start by observing the physical features of the objects your cat is scratching. The answers to the following questions will help you understand your cat's scratching preferences:

- Where are they located? Prominent objects, objects close to sleeping areas, and objects near the entrance to a room are often chosen.
- What texture do they have—are they soft or coarse?
- What shape do they have—are they horizontal or vertical?
- How tall are they? At what height does your cat scratch?

Now, considering your cat's demonstrated preferences, substitute similar objects for her to scratch (rope-wrapped posts, corrugated cardboard, or even a log). Place the acceptable object(s) near the inappropriate object(s) that she's already using. Make sure the objects are stable and won't fall over or move around when she uses them.

Cover the inappropriate objects with something your cat will find unappealing, such as double-sided sticky tape, aluminum foil, sheets of sandpaper, or a plastic carpet runner with the pointy side up. Or you may give the objects an aversive odor by attaching cotton balls containing perfume, a muscle rub, or other safe yet unpleasant substances. Be careful with odors, though, because you don't want the nearby acceptable objects to also smell unpleasant.

When your cat is consistently using the appropriate object, it can be moved very gradually (no more than three inches each day) to a location more suitable to you. It's best, however, to keep the appropriate scratching objects as close to your cat's preferred scratching locations as possible.

Don't remove the unappealing coverings or odors from the inappropriate objects until your cat is consistently using the appropriate objects in their permanent locations for several weeks, or even a month. They should then be removed gradually, not all at once.

Should I Punish My Cat for Scratching?

NO! Punishment is effective only if you catch your cat in the act of scratching unacceptable objects and have provided her with acceptable scratching objects. Punishment after the fact won't change the behavior, may cause her to be afraid of you or the environment, and may elicit defensive aggression. Used by itself, punishment won't resolve scratching

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problems because it doesn't teach your cat where to scratch instead. If you do catch your cat in the act of scratching inappropriate objects, punish her in a way that prevents her from associating the punishment with you. Try making a loud noise (using a whistle, shaking a soda can filled with rocks, or slapping the wall) or using a water-filled squirt bottle. If you use other, more interactive techniques, she'll learn to refrain from scratching in your presence but will continue to scratch when you're not around.

How do I Trim My Cat's Claws?

To help keep them sharp, cats keep their claws retracted until they're needed. As the claws grow too long and become curved, they can't be retracted completely. You should clip off the sharp tips of your cat's claws on her front feet every two weeks or so. Clipping your cat's claws will also help prevent them from becoming snagged in carpets and fabrics, not to mention your skin!

Before trimming your cat's claws, help her get accustomed to having her paws handled and squeezed. You can do this by gently petting her legs and paws while giving her a treat. This will help to make it a more pleasant experience. Gradually increase the pressure so that petting becomes gentle squeezing, as you'll need to do this to extend the claw. Continue with the treats until your cat tolerates this kind of touching and restraint. It may take a little longer if she's not used to having her legs or paws handled.

Apply a small amount of pressure to her paw—with your thumb on top of her paw and your index finger underneath—until a claw is extended. You should be able to see the pink or "quick," which is a small blood vessel. Don't cut into this pink portion, as it will bleed and be painful for your cat. If you cut off just the sharp tip of the claw, the "hook," it will dull the claw and prevent extensive damage to household objects and to your skin.

There are several types of claw trimmers designed especially for pets. These are better than your own nail clipper because they won't crush the claw. Until you and your cat have become accustomed to the routine, one claw or foot a day is enough of a challenge. Don't push to do all of them at once, or you'll both have only negative memories of claw clippers!