

CAT ENRICHMENT

Enrichment is a method used to provide animals with occasions to express species appropriate behaviour. By offering your cat enrichment you will be providing both mental stimulation and physical exercise, which will reduce the likelihood of your cat or kitten practicing destructive or nuisance behaviours.

Four Types of Enrichment

- Environmental
- Social
- Training
- Life

A Few Tips to Remember About Enrichment

- Everything supplied must be safe
- Think of your cat's 5 senses - smell, taste, sight, hearing and touch
- Variety is the spice of life - it is important to rotate enrichment so that your cat doesn't get bored.
- The types of enrichment you can offer your cat is only limited by your imagination, so start thinking



Environmental Enrichment



The environment in which animals are housed needs to be varied and rewarding

By providing environmental enrichment we can reduce stress that the animal may experience, as well as provide occupational therapy.

Some ideas:

- **Table Water Fountains** can be fascinating to cats, and keep them entertained for hours,
- **Sound:** Try leaving a radio on when you are not at home. You may consider using a timer, so that it will turn on at different times of the day.

Some other enrichment ideas:

- *Fresh browse*
- *Feathers*
- *Cat scratching post*
- *Hand made toys and bungee toys*
- *Cubby houses - small cozy warm places to curl up in.*
- *Soft bedding - in high places and in cupboards*
- *Food puzzles*
- *Frozen treats*
- *Catnip pouches*
- *Swimming- Siamese like water and will often paddle in shallow water.*
- *Music playing - all animals respond well to music, for a soothing effect baroque music is best.*
- *Digging - access to fresh soil will provide an outlet for digging.*
- *Pictures - cats enjoy looking at colourful and interesting photos or pictures; they are often transfixed by changing images on TV.*



Take Them for an Explore Outside

Particularly for indoor only cats, all the new sights, sounds, smells and textures present outside, can provide your cat with mental stimulation. In order to keep the safe outside, it is a good idea to harness train them. This will also mean you can take them beyond your yard and that you let them climb trees outside while not getting too high, or chasing wildlife.



Training

Cats are very intelligent animals, so training them to do behaviours on cue can be good opportunity for them to use this intelligence. Make sure you use only positive reinforcement, showing them what you want them to do (e.g. with a treat or toy lure) and rewarding them when they do the right thing (e.g. by giving them the treat or a game with the toy). It is easiest for cats that are highly food motivated, but you can also use toys as a lure and reward, or pats as a reward. Behaviours you can teach them are unlimited but some ideas are: sit, beg (sit on back legs), shake, wave, find the toy etc.



Use Food to Entertain

Particularly for food motivated cats, getting them to use their problem solving skills to access their food can be good enrichment for them. Be imaginative with how you present their food, just make sure it is safe and that you monitor their total food intake.

- Food can be fully hand fed, with food used as rewards throughout the day when your cat is behaving appropriately, or as a reward for tricks (such as sit, shake etc)
- Food can be hidden in different locations and your cat must go on a search to find the hidden morsels. You can vary the spots where you put the food and make the search progressively more challenging.
- Food can also be used in certain cats toys - treat balls can be popular with food motivated cats, these are normally sold as dog toys, but small ones can be used for cats.
- Take some old rags or towels (that you don't mind being ripped or dirtied), tie together into large knots and place dry treats inside the knots.
- Use cardboard tubes (toilet paper rolls, empty glad wrap rolls) containing treats, rolled up in paper, or stuffed full of clean rags.
- Place cat treats in brown paper bag or newspaper and scrunch up
- Cats that like to lick, can like having a flavoured raw hide chews (made for dogs). Cats will normally lick off the flavouring; you can then give the rest of the chew to a dog to finish off. It is important you don't let them over do it, so if they do like this, don't give it to more than every couple of days.

To Make a Treat Bottle:

1. Get two small yoghurt containers (or similar).
2. Cut a few holes in the sides just big enough for the treats to fall out.
3. Glue the open ends of the two containers together.
4. Place treats or cat biscuits inside.
5. To make the bottle extra enticing, smear a small amount of vegemite on the outside.

To Make an Ice Treat:

1. Place various cat treats or in an ice-cream container.
2. Fill with water flavoured with stock or gravy powder.
3. Freeze.
4. Once frozen tip the ice treat out into a larger container for your cat to enjoy.
(a large but shallow container can be good - as chasing the ice treat around is part of the fun!).

TOYS



*Ribbon, corks, string, wool, toilet rolls
All of these can be made into cat toys.*



*Some wool, string, a pom pom
and an ice cream lid.*



*A place to hide to make me feel safe
when I am not sure of my environment.*



*A sling to lie in, keeps me safe and I can
view the world better.*



*Social time with my human counterpart's
is vital for my well being*



*Social contact with humans is very
important for my development*



Wrap the wool over and under your thumb and finger.



Tie a piece of wool tightly in the middle and leave sufficient length.



Cut through one end



so the wool fans as above.



Then cut the other end in the same way.



Fluff it out to make a wool ball.



Then let your feline friends enjoy!

