

CLICKER TRAINING YOUR CAT

Why You Should Clicker Train Your Cat

Clicker training helps your cat feel more in control in their environment. When your cat feels more in control they will be more relaxed and less inclined to exhibit negative behaviors. They'll also realize that offering desirable behavior gets them a reward but an undesirable behavior offers nothing. Cats are very smart, so they quickly figure out that desirable behavior is more beneficial.

The Clicker

You'll need a clicker. This is a small device that makes a cricket-type sound. The reason we use a clicker is that it's a unique sound so when your cat hears it they learn they have done something desirable. The clicker is used to "mark" the behavior you want from your cat when it's displayed. Since most cats are very food-motivated you will immediately follow a click with a food reward. The cat learns the sound of the click means a reward will follow.

Clickers are available at your local pet stores as well as online. For timid cats that might be afraid of the clicker sound you can use the click of a ballpoint pen.

Why do you need to use a clicker and not just merely toss a treat? Because you can click faster than you can toss a treat. You want your cat to know the behavior they displayed at that very nanosecond was exactly what you wanted.

Getting Started Clicker Training Your Cat

You first have to teach your cat to associate the sound of the clicker with the food reward. This is what gives the clicker its value. Break up pieces of treats or use a supply of dry kibble. Click the clicker and then toss a treat. If you feed your cat wet food you can place a small amount on a chopstick or on a soft baby spoon. Once you've clicked and then offered the food, wait for your cat to look at you before repeating the sequence. This helps your cat associate you as the supplier of the reward. Repeat the process about ten times or however long your cat remains interested and engaged.

The first few sessions shouldn't be very long. If your cat isn't interested it might be because they are not hungry enough or the food reward choice isn't motivating enough.

There's so much you can do with clicker training. You can teach your cat a variety of fun behaviors but you can also use it for behavior modification by rewarding behaviors (however subtle) you want to see again. Clicker training becomes a great way to change your cat's mindset from negative to positive.

