

ENRICHMENT THROUGH PLAY



In the wild, we cats rely on our speed, stealth and cleverness for our very survival.

In your home, we have to be able to express these instincts to stay happy, healthy, and well-behaved.

Cats are intelligent and active creatures that require mental and physical stimulation to thrive! Having plenty of toys around not only helps create an enriching environment, it will also help you bond when spending time together and keep your cat happily playing on their own when you need time to yourself.

Picking the Right Toy

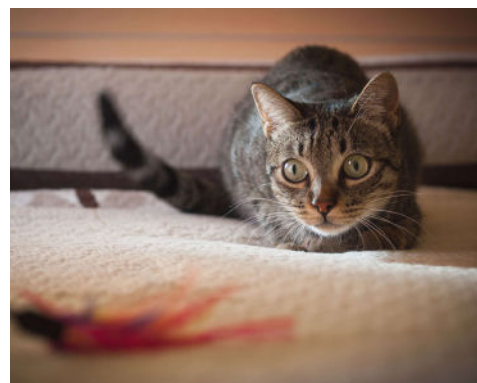
The best toys mimic the cat's natural activity – HUNTING!

Hunting involves two main behaviors:

- 1. Stalking & Chasing** – When potential prey is spotted, the cat gets low to the ground and creeps towards it trying to remain undetected. Once the cat believes it is within striking distance, or if the prey notices and bolts, the cat will chase at full speed.
 - › **Recommended toys: small mice, springs, crinkle balls, laser pointers, motorized toys, string, and tunnels**
- 2. Trapping & Catching** – If prey is cornered in a shed or under some branches, the cat will root around, scratch, sniff, pounce, reach, and retrieve.
 - › **Recommended toys: puzzle toys, feeders, activity rugs, short wand toys, robot bugs, and treat dispensers**

Additional Tips

- **Stimulate the Senses** – Cats rely greatly on their senses of smell and sound, so include toys that stimulate their nose and ears as well! Toys that squeak, scratch and crinkle, and those that smell (think catnip!) or dispense pungent treats are sure to be a hit!
- **Age Appropriate** – Kitty ignoring an old favorite? Put it away for a few days to see if interest returns. If it doesn't, there's a good chance she's outgrown the toy! But don't toss it yet – sometimes, toys can be combined. For example, a humdrum stuffed mouse or ball can go into a puzzle toy to reignite their attention!
- **Personality Fit** – Cats are as varied in their personalities as people, and that extends to the toys and type of play they like. Some prefer chasing and pouncing, others will prefer methodical digging and searching. Try a variety of toys to see which types your cat gravitates to most.
- **Playtime** – Interactive play is a key part of enrichment for cats and one of the most important factors to happiness and well-adjustment in their home. **Play with your cat for at least 15 minutes every day – and provide plenty of toys they can play with on their own as well!**



IMPORTANT: When introducing a new toy, always supervise the initial play to ensure that your cat is using the toy safely, and not eating it, getting stuck, or otherwise misusing it.



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