



## **How YOU Can Train Your CAT!**

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## What Basic Training Does Your Cat Need?

Cats are animals. Humans are animals as well but supposedly of a higher order. In order to live together in a companionable and happy relationship there are some things that your cat needs to learn. Owning an animal of any sort should be more pleasure than pain, but there will be considerable pain if the animal is in control of the household.

So what is the basic training your cat needs, to establish a happy relationship in the family?

First, there is toilet training. There would be nothing worse than to come home from a hard day at the office to find an unmentionable lump on your best bedspread. So where to go to the toilet is one of the most important things to train your cat or kitten. Cats are naturally clean animals so it is quite easy to train to use a litter tray. Simply place him on it after his meal.

Other basic training may depend on where you live. If you live in an apartment, you may need to train your cat to lead so that you can take him outside. If you live in the country, this may not be necessary. If you live close to major traffic, but have a backyard, you may need to train your cat to keep away from the road, otherwise he is likely to get run over.

Another important item that will need attention is to stop your cat from scratching the furniture. Cats love to scratch and it is their nature to sharpen their claws. They don't just do it to ruin furniture, but this is what will happen if they are not trained. Remove your cat from the furniture immediately he starts to scratch and place his paws against his scratching pole.

If you travel a lot and wish to take your cat with you, travel training is a must. It's not wise to allow your cat freedom in the car, as it may happen to climb onto you while you are driving and this can cause an accident. Also, if you happen to have an accident

with the cat loose in the car, it could be injured unnecessarily. A cat travel cage should be used, but make sure it is steadied by using a seat belt to hold it in place.

One more important thing to train your cat in is not to climb up the screen doors and windows. To save your screen from being torn to shreds, install a cat door and train kitty how to go through it. Most people start out with a kitten rather than a full-grown cat, so it is easier to train them. Once cats are fully grown it is very hard to break them of certain bad habits, so start while they are young and keep it up. Don't let them get away with behavior that is not acceptable to you.



## How to Gain the Respect of Your Cat

Whenever we humans decide to keep an animal as a pet, there are some ground rules that should be established. Remember that your territory is not your pet's natural territory and that all animals still behave as animals no matter where they live. Trying to change your cat's bad behavior requires consistency and patience. If you love your cat the last thing you want is to seem like the enemy - someone to be disliked or even feared.

So how can you train your cat so that his behavior is acceptable in your world and still remain friends? The answer is not to let him rule the roost. Your cat will not respect you if he is the boss.

You need to let him know who is boss while still gaining his trust and affection. This means that he must be rewarded positively with treats and cuddles when he does things that you approve of. But when he insists on doing things he knows you don't like, you must remain calm, but just as determined to get your way, as he is to get his way. From the time they are kittens, cats will obey the authority of the queen cat; in other words, their mother. So you have to adopt that place in the cat's life.

One way to do this is to carry the kitten around by the scruff of his neck occasionally. This is the way in which his mother would have moved him. The scruff of the neck is the loose skin on the back of the neck. It is quite easy to grab and does not hurt either kitten or grown cat to be carried this way. You will notice when you pick him up like this he will suddenly go limp and just hang there. That is what he would do if his mother had him in her mouth by the scruff. Even if your cat is no longer a kitten, he will let you carry him by the scruff without complaint. So when you find him doing things he shouldn't do, pick him up by the scruff of the neck and put him down away from his mischief.

Make sure your kitty has plenty of play and stimulation so that he is not bored and he will be a better-behaved cat, too. Soft and squeaky toys will keep his attention focused on play instead of mischief. Even a cardboard box or large paper bag to creep into will entertain him for hours.

## **How To Litter-box Train Your New Cat**

One of the most important things to do with your new cat or kitten is to train it to use the litter box. In the wild, one of a cat's more useful behaviors is to scratch a hole in some kind of soft medium to go to the toilet. This behavior is still strong in domesticated cats, which makes it easier to train them. When cats have access to a yard - especially one with a garden, they will often prefer to go outside. But if your cat is confined to the house or apartment, it is necessary to provide him with a litter tray or box to prevent puddles and other nasty things happening to your floor.

The litter tray should be wide and shallow, but with vertical sides. This will help to retain the medium when the cat is scratching and digging. It should be in a place where human traffic is at a minimum. The laundry is often the place chosen for the litter tray. Sand could be used in the tray, but commercial cat-litter is best due to its high absorbency. And cats seem to love using it.

If you have a new kitten, it is not too early to start training him to use the litter box immediately. As soon as he has finished drinking his milk, take him to the litter tray and set him down gently on the litter. It's a good idea to feed him close to the litter tray at first, so he will know where it is. If you feed your new kitten in the kitchen and then carry him into the laundry to the litter tray, you cannot expect him to know his way into the laundry the next time round.

So feed the kitten next to the litter tray until the habit of using it is well established. After this, it will be possible to change the feeding place if desired. If the kitten does a puddle anywhere else but in the litter tray, be sure to clean it up with strong smelling disinfectant to completely remove the odor, otherwise kitty will simply follow his nose next time he wants to go.

Once you have placed the kitten onto the litter tray a few times, he will soon get the idea of what he is supposed to do. Cats and kittens are very easy to train to use a litter tray. Placing an attractive cover over the litter tray is a good idea, but make sure kitty

knows how to use the tray without the cover first. Then you can cover it up and show him the way in.



## What Cat Behaviors Need to be Broken?

There are several cat behaviors that are not acceptable for pets. However, much will depend on your own style of living and whether you live in the country or the city. One of the worst cat behaviors is scratching; that is, scratching humans. Cats' claws can inflict rather nasty scratches, so this is one behavior that should be discouraged as much as possible. It won't be possible to eliminate it entirely as it is a cat's nature to scratch and it does so to protect itself. Making sure your cat is not frightened and never feels threatened will go a long way to preventing scratching you or others in the family.

Spraying is another behavior that is unwelcome in the home. Cats spray to mark their territory, so it is simply a natural thing for them to do. One way to discourage this behavior is to buy a bottle pheromone. It is a synthetic cat spray and is odorless to humans, but cats can smell it. If your cat thinks another cat has marked out its territory, then it won't be so likely to do the same thing.

Jumping onto high places is also normal cat behavior, but it may not fit in with your lifestyle if you have antique vases sitting on shelves. Neither is it healthy to have kitty on the counter while you are preparing food for the children. Cats can be a danger to themselves as well as to others when they jump unexpectedly onto places that may not support them.

It goes without saying that you will want your cat to use the litter tray. If he does not, he may have to become an outside cat. Another behavior that is natural for cats is to go hunting. We like them to catch mice and rats, but when kitty comes in licking feathers from his jowls, we wonder if that little bird was amongst those facing extinction. A bell on his collar will help to prevent kitty from killing too many birds.

It's not a very nice thing to be cuddled up to kitty only to have him unexpectedly sink his teeth into your arm. Yet biting is also a natural cat behavior. If your cat is a biter, discourage him by placing him on the floor immediately when he bites. It may be that he had finished with cuddling anyway and this was his way of letting you know. If his

biting seems excessive, you may need to keep that rolled up newspaper handy. He will soon understand not to bite.

## How to Stop Scratching and Clawing

There is nothing worse than a cat that is constantly scratching the furniture. Your beautiful furniture can be ruined very quickly by this behavior, so it is wise to do something about it as soon as possible.

Scratching is natural behavior for a cat, so it won't be possible to prevent him from doing it altogether. What you must do is train him to scratch on something that doesn't matter. Scratching poles made of rope wound around a rod are available especially for this purpose. It is a good idea to get one as soon as you get your kitten. If you teach him to use it right from when he is little, then it will be easier.

If the kitty doesn't seem to like the scratching pole as much as your best chair, then buy some catmint and smear it on the rope. The aroma is very attractive to cats. Also get a spray bottle full of water to spray in his face when he scratches your furniture. Cats hate having water in their faces. There is only one problem with this; your furniture may be French-polished and so watermark very easily. What to do?

The idea is to teach kitty, not hurt him, so roll up one or two sheets only of newspaper and use it to tap his face with. It won't hurt him, but he will hate the noise and feel of it. This is also a good way to stop him scratching people. After being smacked with it a few times, simply hearing the rustle of paper will often stop him. Sometimes, cats will crouch around a corner and spring out at you or the children. Don't forget that while it is normal behavior for a cat to do this sort of thing, the behavior needs to be controlled or it may cause injury.

The rolled up newspaper trick will soon discourage kitty from pouncing and scratching. If you hold him up by the scruff of the neck at the same time, you will exert dominance over him, telling him you are the top cat. Smack him lightly on the paws or face with the paper, and then put him down. If your cat puts out his claws when you are petting him, gently push at them until he retracts them. In this way you'll teach him that claws out while being petted on laps is unacceptable behavior.

## How to Prevent Your Cat Eating Houseplants

Many people grow lovely houseplants that add to the ambience of their home. But what happens when kitty attacks and eats that houseplant you were so proud of? One day you have a healthy plant, next day the leaves are hanging in tatters and the only thing left to do is throw it in the trash bin. Naughty kitty! But wait before you spank.

First, you must decide what caused your cat to attack the plant. There are two main reasons that cats eat plants. One is that green food is part of their diet. If your kitty has not been given any vegetables or greenery to eat, he could be simply following his instinct for survival. In this case, make sure kitty gets to go outside frequently so he can eat the grasses of his choice. Eating grass will also help to remove fur balls that can catch in his throat. If you cannot let your cat outside, then grow some special cat grass in a pot and allow him free access to it. A good pet shop will provide the right kind of seed.

Another reason your cat may have attacked the potted plant is that the breeze rustled its leaves and so it became an enemy to be attacked and eaten. This is a natural behavior for cats in the wild. If this is the case, then move the plant to a place where kitty cannot readily see it – somewhere away from drafts and breezes. It may suffice to place the plant upon a low table, or you may need a higher shelf for it.

Of course, once kitty has had a wonderful time destroying that plant you loved so much, he might decide he wants to do it all the time. In this case, you may have to live without indoor plants, or keep kitty confined to a room where there are none while you are out of the house. On the other hand, it may have been sheer boredom that made him attack the plant – he could have just needed something or someone to play with. Give kitty plenty of attention when you are home. Make sure he has plenty of his own toys. They need not be expensive store-bought toys; homemade ones are easy to make and easily renewable.

Dangle a small wisp of scrunched up paper a few inches off the floor by tying it from something with string. A chair rung would do, or a cupboard doorknob. Kitty will love to pounce on this and wrestle on his back with it. A light, small ball will have him

skittering all over the floor as he chases it. With plenty else to interest him, he should soon forget about your indoor plants.

## **How to Stop Your Cat Jumping on Counters and Tables**

One important thing in training your cat is to stop him jumping up on the table or counter. You may think its no big deal to have kitty on the counter – in fact some people may think it rather cute. But stop and consider. Kitty doesn't really know what he is going to land on when he makes that big leap from floor to counter. Do you really want him to land on those cookies that are just ready to go into the oven? Or he could easily knock something hot or breakable onto the floor not to mention that it is unsanitary. So how can you stop him?

The trick is to use something he hates to discourage this habit. Most cats hate sudden, loud noise, so if you make a loud noise in his face when he jumps up, he'll quickly jump back down. Soon he'll begin to associate the loud noise with that particular activity and he'll stop. So what can you use to make a loud noise? An empty soda can with a few pebbles or marbles in it is one good idea. Shake it in kitty's face so it rattles loudly and startles him. He won't like that. If you also say no several times very loudly he may soon stop jumping as soon as he hears that command. Some people believe growling is a good idea. This is how kitty's mother would teach him what is allowed and what is not. This is one way in which cats communicate with one another, too.

A bottle filled with pebbles could also be used, but the noise is slightly muted by the plastic or could be dangerous in glass. Another idea is to roll a few sheets of newspaper up and slap the counter right in front of him with it. Then if he does not jump down, pick him up by the scruff of the neck and place him on the floor. Never scoop him up from the table and cuddle or kiss him, as this is a positive reinforcement and will encourage him to jump up next time he wants some attention.

Spraying kitty with a spray bottle full of clean water is another method of discouraging the habit of jumping onto the counter. If kitty simply won't stop jumping, try doing several things at the same time. Keep a child's horn – the sort you can blow into – nearby. As soon as kitty gets to the top of the counter, blow the horn in his face, spray him in the face with the water and tap him smartly on the head with

the rolled up newspaper. Do it every time you see him up there and he'll soon get tired of all that stress and stop. At least, we hope so!

## **How to Stop Your Cat Running Out the Door**

If you live in an urban area or anywhere near a major traffic route, you may need to stop your cat from heading out the door every time you open it. Cats can be easily frightened in traffic and you don't want your pet to meet with a nasty accident. Not only will an accident be unpleasant for your pet, veterinarian fees tend to make a large hole in your budget. Stopping kitty from running out the door will not be easy, but can be managed with patience. It is certainly easier to train a small kitten than a grown cat whose habits may be ingrained.

Whether you have a cat or a kitten, it will need to be trained to stay indoors unless you allow it to go out. To do this, use the cat's natural traits, working with his nature rather than against it. We know that cats dislike loud, startling noises, so every time the door is open and kitty heads that way, try and be ready with a loud noise – but between him and the door. Don't come up behind him with it or you'll just frighten him right out the door.

One good way to train your kitty is to enlist the aid of another person to stand just outside the door. Then you can open it and as soon as your kitten pokes his nose out, have the other person squirt him with a spray bottle or water gun. Two people will be even better. One can have a spray bottle; the other can have the noisemaker. This will frighten your cat back into the room where you can be waiting to soothe him and tell him what a good cat he is for coming back.

To add even more to the lesson, you can be sure to call him back just before the noise and water spray happen. If you make your voice sound alarmed, kitty will soon get the message and it will teach him that an alarmed voice means something unpleasant is going to happen to him. This can be useful at other times, too. He may be outside in the yard and you suddenly notice he's about to jump over the fence. To call him back in a voice of alarm will save him from getting lost or chased by a dog or even another cat.



Of course, always remember to use positive reinforcement such as petting or treats when he does the right thing.



## **What Cat Behaviors Need to be Learned?**

There are a number of behaviors that your cat needs to learn so that your relationship will be a happy and stress-free one. Having a cat as a pet has many benefits, but these can be out-weighed if the cat is allowed to rule the roost, especially if his nature is exuberant and mischievous. Certain behaviors need to be learned by your cat for the safety of other members of the house as well as to enhance the relationship between cat and humans.

An important thing for kitty to learn is to use his litter tray. Urinating on furniture or carpet will spoil it for life and leave an odor that is impossible to remove. It is also unhealthy to have puddles or other unmentionables on the floor where toddlers may be crawling.

A cat or kitten also needs to learn to come when called. This makes it easier to get him out of danger if he has wandered away and it also makes feeding time more organized. If you need to go out and the cat must be shut in, you need to be able to call him and have him turn up in a reasonable time-frame or you'll be late for work or wherever you were off to.

Cats are nocturnal animals. That's why they suddenly come to life around sunset and want to go wandering. That's why they snooze a lot in the day. This behavior is impossible to prevent entirely, but you can keep kitty locked inside at night and play with him during the day. The less he sleeps in the day, the more he will sleep at night.

If you travel a lot and want to take your cat, then he will need to learn how to travel comfortably in a car and it's important for him not to wander away and get lost once you arrive at your destination. It would be a good thing for your cat to learn how to lead in a harness, and then you can take him out for a walk without worrying that he will stray or run into danger.

Cats also need to learn not to be destructive. It's a cat's nature to sharpen his claws and to hunt and jump. These behaviors are not so welcome in the home, so the cat must learn where he is allowed to scratch and what he can jump on safely. He doesn't know that the stove will burn him if he jumps onto it, nor does he realize that he might knock down your antique vase if he jumps up on that shelf. These are the sorts of things a cat needs to learn.

## How to Teach Your Cat to Come When Called

It's important to train your cat to come when it is called for a variety of reasons. You may need to go out suddenly and you don't wish to leave your cat outside where he may be in danger of other prowling cats or dogs chasing him. If you've trained your cat to come when called, the task of getting him inside will be simple. So how can we train a cat to come when called? One of the easiest ways is to use his love of food.

You don't have to train him to know his name. Cats may be called a name, but this is often for the convenience of the owners, rather than the cat. Kitty doesn't care what he's called and often will answer to any name, so long as it is said in the same tone of voice. But back to using food for training. When it is time to feed your kitty, make a loud and specific noise, like rattling a spoon or knife on the side of the cat food can. He will associate that noise with being fed and come very quickly. But don't leave it at that. You don't want to have to rattle a spoon every time you want your cat to come.

While rattling the spoon, call the kitty's name over and over. Say it loudly enough to be heard above the rattling spoon. Very often a high-pitched 'kitty-kitty-kitty' will do the trick. He will get used to the rattling spoon meaning food, and the sound of your voice will be associated with the rattling spoon, so that very soon he will come bounding up when you simply call without rattling the spoon.

It is good to reinforce this good behavior by offering a treat, so when he comes at your call and you don't intend to feed him, give him a little reward instead. It can be a food reward, a cuddle while telling him what a good kitty he is, or you could offer him a toy and play with him for a while. Kittens love to chase a wisp of paper tied to a string, so it needn't be an expensive toy. Cats respond to kindness and play as well as to food.

If your kitty doesn't come promptly to be fed, decrease the amount of food you give him. When he is really hungry, he will come much more promptly. This is the time to rattle that spoon and call loudly.

## How to Walk Your Cat on a Leash

It is not the most usual thing to see a cat being walked on a leash. Traditionally, it is dogs that have leads and cats that roam free. However, these days, with so many small birds and animals on the verge of extinction, you may want to consider training your cat or kitten to walk on a leash. This will prevent him from hunting down and killing butterflies or small birds. It will keep him from climbing trees to take baby birds from their nests. It will also keep him out of danger, as you will be monitoring his whereabouts in a responsible manner.

Rather than just using a collar and leash to walk your cat, think about using a harness. A cat's head is quite small compared to the rest of it and a collar may be inclined to pull over his head and off. The harness straps should encircle the neck and the body just behind the front legs, with two more straps to join the circles together; one through the front legs and one down the back of the neck. There will need to be a clip for the leash as well. Light leather or synthetic material is good for a cat's harness. Don't use anything too heavy or the cat will reject it.

It's also important to get your cat used to the look and feel of the leash before you take him walking in it. After he has become used to seeing the leash, (you could leave it in his bed) then let him wear it for a few minutes each day before leading him around by the lead. While still indoors, tug gently on the lead whilst calling your kitty. When he comes to you, praise him, but never force or scold him if he doesn't come, or he'll think the leash is a punishment.

When you walk your cat on his leash, don't walk him the same way as you would a dog. Dogs like to run fast and are happy to trot at a good gait beside you, once they have learned to lead. Cats are quite different. They don't usually run or walk fast in a straight line from A to B. They tend to stop and start, to wander about and to inspect strange rustlings in the grass. For your cat to enjoy walking outside with you, you must allow him to do at least some of these things. Never pull the cat along roughly. He will be likely to try and back off very quickly. Gently encourage him to come with you and praise him when he comes in the right direction. Hold out treats for him as you call him to come.

Cats also feel the heat easily. You can't expect to go for a quick run around the block on the hot sidewalk with a cat. Remember kitty has no shoes for protection against the blistering heat or cold snow. Wherever possible walk your cat in the shade and on grass. Sun is all right if it's not very hot.

Respect your cat's need to rest when you are walking him. It's a good thing to stop and smell the roses yourself. Let your walk be in a calm and stress-free environment. Your cat will likely be afraid of loud traffic or skateboarders zooming past his tail. With these few pointers, your cat should soon begin to enjoy his daily walk.

## How to Teach Your Cat to Sit on Command

Some people would have us believe that it is impossible to teach a cat anything, but if he can be taught to come for his dinner then he can be taught other things as well. It may require patience and constancy, but the end result will be worth it. Not many cats have been taught to sit on command, yet it is not impossible to teach your cat this trick. Make sure your cat is wide-awake and a little hungry before you start to teach him this one

Get him used to accepting edible treats from your hand, so that he knows when he smells it, that you have something in your hand for him. Choose a time that the cat is standing. Approach him with the treat and let him smell that it is in your closed fist. Once he has sniffed your hand, move it over the top of his head. Not high above him or he might jump to reach it. Just slide your hand over the top of his head, about one inch above it. You will see that to keep his nose near the treat, he will sit. If he does not sit, gently push on his back –just in front of the tail - until he does.

Of course, you must also give voice commands. Say “Sit” in a firm voice at the same time that you move your hand. As soon as kitty sits, give him the treat and praise him. You need to do this several times throughout the day to remind him what it is all about. It’s no use doing it once this week and then forgetting all about it until next week. Cats are not likely to remember anything like that for a whole week.

Once your cat sits quickly for his treat, you can try doing it with no treat. Still use your hand motion, but with nothing in the hand. When he sits, open the hand and show him there is nothing there, but still praise and stroke him for obeying. The next time you do it and he obeys, have a treat for him, but gradually wean him off the treats. You will need to make him sit at least twice a day for some time before he gets the hang of it. Once he is used to sitting without a treat, try giving the command without the hand motion. If he does not obey, go back to using the hand motion with the treat for a while longer. In this way you will train your cat to sit, and it will amaze your friends.

## How to Teach Your Cat to Accept Brushing

Cats love to be stroked, so it is easy to teach your cat to accept brushing. Brushing will help to remove loose hair and prevent kitty getting a fur ball stuck in his throat. It also helps to remove irritating prickles he may have picked up on his walks outside. You will be able to keep tabs on his general health if you brush him regularly, too.

Choose a time when kitty is feeling a bit sleepy and wants to curl up on your warm lap. Have the brush handy so you don't have to disturb him to get it. If he hasn't seen the brush before, hold it near his face so he can sniff it all over if he wants. In this way he will understand that it won't hurt him and so he won't be frightened of it. In fact, it's a good idea to rub your own hands along the handle of the brush so he can detect your scent on it. If he's used to you, he will be reassured that this strange tool is to be trusted.

Once he has inspected and accepted the brush, begin to brush your cat with slow and gently movements. Always brush with the lay of the hair, not against it. If kitty tries to grab the brush with his paws to play with it, put it away immediately. You don't want him to start playing every time he sees the brush, you want him to learn to keep still and let you brush him.

As soon as kitty has quieted down, start to brush him again. Start at about ear level and work backwards with a long, fluid movement. Never try to brush his face, or you might damage his delicate eyes and whiskers. Brushing the tangles out of badly matted hair can cause pain, so be careful to do it gently. If kitty expects pain every time he sees the brush, he won't be amenable to the process.

Several different brushes can be useful when grooming your pet. A large brush with stiff bristles is good for the body, while a smaller, softer brush can be easier to manage the belly and tail. If your cat has long tail hairs, you may need a brush with bristles that are a little stiffer than the smaller brush has. A comb can also be a handy part of your cat grooming toolbox.



## **How to Teach Your Cat to Have His Nails Clipped**

Cats can cause a great deal of damage with their sharp claws, not only to furniture, also to the humans in their household. If you have this trouble, you might want to consider having your cat's claws clipped. This is especially important if you have small children in your home.

Cat clippers are available at most pet shops. Don't use the same clippers on your cat that you may use for yourself. These are not right for an animal and will pinch his claws painfully. It's a good idea to get your kitty used to having his claws handled right from when he is tiny. Wait until he is feeling sleepy – on your lap is a good place to have him. Handle his paws and claws frequently by gently holding them squeezing them, picking them up and generally playing gently with them. In this way, he will see that you mean him no harm when touching his feet. Remember that cats' feet are very sensitive and tender.

You will be able to make kitty unsheathe his claws if you gently squeeze his paws. Run your fingers gently over the claws several times, but if he tries to scratch you, simply stop and wait until he becomes sleepy again. It may take several days for kitty to begin to accept having his claws and paws touched. It is wise to do it often, even when his claws don't need clipping, because then he will be so used to it he won't mind.

Once you think he is happy to have you play with his claws and he doesn't try to scratch you, you can introduce the clippers. Again, wait until he is in a sleepy mood before you start to clip. It may be a good thing for you to just hold him, while another person does the clipping, that way you'll be able to prevent any sudden movements on kitty's part that could result in injury to him or you.

When you are playing with kitty's claws, take a good look and you'll see the pinkish cloudy part near where the nail comes out of its sheath. That is the equivalent to the quick of a humans nail. Be sure to never clip into this part or you will cause a great deal of pain to kitty and his claws will bleed. If kitty truly doesn't like to get his nails

clipped and yet they must be done, he can be wrapped up in a towel to help hold him and protect you from scratches.

Some people have their cat's front claws removed. It can be a painful process, but if you have a cat that you just are not able to train not scratch your antique furniture this can be an option. This process should only be done by a veterinarian and if you follow his, or her, instructions the initial discomfort is short lived.



## **How to Teach Your Cat Tricks From Natural Behaviors**

The best way to teach a cat tricks is by making use of his natural behavior. In the zoo you will often see a lion or tiger that will jump for his food. In the wild, these animals do such things naturally. They are a part of the cat's normal behavior, so this makes it much easier to train them. So what other natural behaviors do cats have?

They love to climb and jump, so any trick that includes this will be one that kitty should take to with no trouble. For instance, you could teach him to jump from one stool to another to get his food. Of course, if he then wants to jump from the stool onto the counter where you don't want him, you might have a problem.

Cats love to chase and pounce on anything that rustles, so that if you have a trick where you want kitty to chase something, make sure it also rustles. Little kittens are more playful than mature cats, so this is a good time to teach them tricks. Kittens will often chase a shadow on the floor. If this is the shadow of your hand, you can make it go up the wall and kitty will jump after it.

An older cat will often chase a tennis ball the children are hitting to each other across the yard, especially if it bounces. To the cat, it looks like a mouse bounding along. This behavior can often be incorporated into what seems to be some kind of trick, but in reality, it is a natural behavior modified or added to and the result becomes a trick.

Cats are very quick to see moving things, so you can get your cat to look as if it is shaking its head, just by using a movement at each side of the room. This can be started up a bit closer, then gradually moved further away. A noise may be used first, to get the cat to look that way.

When teaching your cat tricks, don't confuse him by trying to do several at once. Use one movement or trick at a time and stop as soon as kitty loses interest. Choose the time of day that kitty seems to be most playful to encourage these playful behaviors and kitty will soon come to look forward to them. In no time you'll have him doing

tricks and he'll think it's the best fun he's ever had. Don't forget to reward him every time he does something you want him to and always be patient. Never punish kitty if he doesn't do what you want.

