

# FIFI



# FUREVER

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## Fun Games For Fifi

First Aid For Fifi

Myth Buster: The Dish On Cat Dishes

Training Tips: How To Stop Destructive Behaviors

Next Issue: Home Remedies For Fifi





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# CONTENT



**02**

## **Fun Games For Fifi**

There are several different ways to keep your cat entertained. Whether you choose to play fetch or tag with him, or choose to set him up with your tablet so he can play Mouse for Cats or Cat Alone 2, the end result will be a happier, more mentally stimulated cat.



**07**

## **First Aid For Fifi**

Do you know what to do if your feline friend has a medical emergency? You can't call 911 because they only take care of human emergencies, and what happens if your closest emergency vet is located more than five minutes from your home?



**12**

## **Training Tips: How To Stop Destructive Behaviors**

Having a cat that's destroying your home is no fun for anyone, including your cat. While you might believe that your cat is being destructive to hurt or upset you, that's quite simply not the case. Instead, your feline friend is trying to give you some insight into what's going on with them.



**16**

## **Myth Buster: The Dish On Cat Dishes**

It used to be that humans simply fed cats out of whatever bowl or plate they had handy—or even just handed them some scraps. Over time, though, cat bowls have changed to meet your feline friend's needs more appropriately.

**Next Issue:** Home Remedies For Fifi



# Fun Games For Fifi

When we talk about cat games, they're split into two very different categories. First, there are the little games that you and your cat play together such as fetch. Then there are games that cats can play on your tablet. We're going to discuss both types, starting with the games you and your cat play together!

## 10 Fun Bonding Games You Can Play With Your Cat

This is the category that can often be misunderstood. Your cat may have tried to tag your feet or legs before, and you might have thought that he was just being weird or, even worse, annoying. However, what your cat was most likely attempting to do is play with you. And if you choose to engage, the two of you will be able to build an even stronger bond.

### Fetch (Or Catch)

This game is super simple, but your cat will still need your help. Most cats have a strong desire to run after their toys if you throw them (especially if it's a toy that looks like their prey). One of the best ways to play this game is to get your cat hyped up a bit and then toss the toy from one end of the hallway to the other. As long as she is hyped up enough, she'll sprint to the other end of the hall in an attempt to catch it!

This is where the rubber meets the road, as some cats will not truly fetch the toy. My cat, Riley, absolutely loves to chase thrown mice and/or balls, but there is no way he's going to bring it back to me. He wants me to go pick it up after he's done batting it around. I used to have a cat, though, that would chase a ball, pick it up in her mouth, and return it to me.

Either way, most cats want their toy to be tossed at least two to three times, and sometimes more. As far as interactive cat games go, it's tough to beat this one!

### Tag

This game is Riley's favorite, and it might just be your cat's favorite too. The way it works is that he'll run through his tunnel, wait just at the end of it, then dart out and tag me with one of his paws. He always uses his soft paws for this (meaning his claws are not extended).

Once I've been tagged, it's my job to chase him back through his tunnel and tag him. We repeat this process until he gets bored with it. By the way, we suggest that you don't truly "tag" your cat – but you should reach out with your hand in his direction, and he needs to see you do this. If you do want to tag him, keep it very, very light. That way, he can't misinterpret your actions.



## Catnip

Has your cat been getting a bit bored with her toys lately? Whether it has a pouch to place catnip in or you simply rub the toy in some catnip, this is a fantastic way to get her to re-engage. Once you introduce the catnip to your cat, she'll usually take over. Cats that are susceptible to catnip will go absolutely wild! Approximately 70–80% of cats have the ability to really enjoy playing the catnip game. If your cat isn't one of them, you'll find out pretty quickly.

## Hide And Seek



You and your cat can have a LOT of fun playing hide and seek together. Once you've got your cat's attention, you should run away from them (which will kick in their chasing instincts) and then duck behind some furniture. In my house, this means running from the living room into the bedroom, then ducking behind the bed.

Some cats will come crashing right after you. Other cats, meanwhile, will be more hesitant and will take some time to find you. If your cat is being too hesitant, stick your head out and then pull it right back down. You may have to do this a few times before your feline friend “finds” you. Once they do, chase them back to your starting point.

Some cats will run and hide, while other cats will wait for you to go hide again. Either way, this is a fantastic bonding game!

## Chasing Their Prey

We all know how much cats enjoy chasing their prey. Therefore, it makes good sense to help them imitate this process. Whether you use a brightly colored cat ribbon to capture their interest or attach

a toy to the end of a string, they're going to end up going after it. Just be patient at first, and you'll soon see how wild your cat can be.

**NOTE:** The best way to get a cat's attention when you play this game is by dragging the toy or ribbon near their face. Do it slowly, just like their prey. You might have to place the toy by their face a few times as you slowly drag it, but once you've got their attention, they will launch an attack. Once they've done this, you can change the pattern and speed of their “prey.” Just make sure they get to catch it occasionally, or they'll get frustrated.

## Food Play

Would you like to give your cat the pleasure of playing with you without having to do much? You'll love food dispenser balls, then! The idea is to give your kitty a puzzle to solve, and they'll be rewarded by their favorite food or treats. Because most cats are highly food motivated, this is a fantastic game that should work most of the time.

## Ping Pong

If you're familiar with the concept of ping pong, you can easily bring this game to life with your cat. Instead of using a ping pong table, though, you'll use a nearby wall. Toss the ping pong ball so that it bounces off the wall. Once your cat gets into it, they'll chase the ping pong ball. Keep tossing it to see your cat contort and twist herself as if she's an acrobat!

**NOTE:** Don't toss the ball too high up the wall or too hard. Doing this could cause your feline friend to hurt herself.

## Climbing A Cat Tree

If your cat was in the wild, he would naturally climb things such as trees. Imitate this behavior in your own home by giving him a cat tree. To encourage him to climb, you can hide treats in various places on the cat tree. To make it even more fun, be sure to change the places you hide the treats each time you play. This will mentally and physically stimulate him, which will make your kitty much happier!

## Teach Your Cat To Do Tricks

Lots of people believe that cats cannot be taught tricks, but this couldn't be further from the truth.



As long as you invest some time – and some treats – your feline friend can absolutely learn to do at least a few simple tricks.

For instance, you can teach your cat to “sit pretty” by first teaching her to “sit.” Use the following steps:

- Holding a treat, sit by your cat.
- Once she tries to move toward the treat, tell her to sit.
- Hold the treat over her head. Repeat the sit command.
- As soon as her rear end touches the ground, give her a treat.
- Repeat this up to 4–6 times.
- Now, hold a treat high enough above her head that she stands on her back legs.
- Give her another treat because she just sat pretty!

You can also easily teach her to “high-five” you and, believe it or not, how to come when you call her.

### Fishing Rod Toy



This toy drives most cats absolutely bonkers! Begin by dangling the fishing rod’s attached toy in front of him. As soon as he goes for it, begin to move it around. You can toss it in limitless directions, and even get it to go underneath furniture, etc. The only

limit to this particular toy is your cat’s imagination. As long as they’re having fun with it, keep on playing!

## Electronic Games For Your Cat

Sometimes, no matter how much you love your cat, you need to get other stuff done. So, how can you distract them so that they’ll happily leave you alone? The answer is technology!

### Cat TV

If you haven’t looked up “cat TV” on YouTube yet, your cat has been seriously missing out. There are tons of different videos, but they all have a basic theme. Your cat will be able to look at – and hear – various birds, along with some squirrels, chipmunks, etc.

The only bad thing about this particular game is that if you set them up with your actual television, you’ll need to pay attention to what they’re doing. That’s because some cats will jump and try to attack the TV! A better way to do this, though, is to set them up with a tablet. That way, if they try to catch one of the birds, they’re not going to break anything.

The videos typically last for several hours, but your cat won’t pay attention for that long. Instead, she’ll be laser focused on it for anywhere from 1-15 minutes, then she’s probably going to take a nap. If you keep the video on, she’ll most likely get into it again once she wakes back up.

### Stray Video Game

This one is a game for the both of you. If you haven’t heard about Stray yet, it’s an indie Game of the Year contender that puts you in the position of being a stray cat. You must make your way throughout the game’s landscape to find your way back home. It’s the most realistic video game about cats, and it gets a lot of attention from them, too.

You can look up photos and videos of other people’s cats reacting to them playing Stray. It’s a hilarious and adorable mix, and your cat just might act the same!



## Mouse For Cats

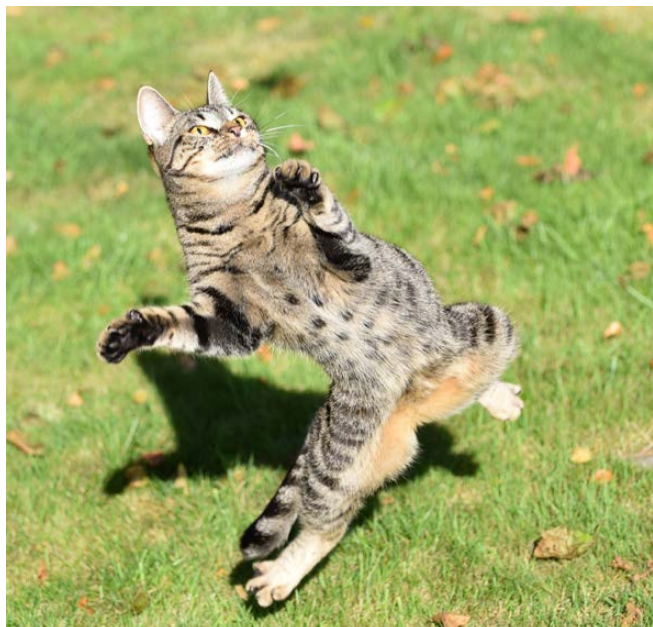
Speaking of video games, why not let your cat take the driver's seat? In Mouse for Cats, your kitty will be presented with a simple video game that gives them points for every mouse they tap on the screen. You can make it even better by increasing the number of mice on the screen and even adjusting the way the mice sound. And, if your cat really likes this game, why not pay a little bit to unlock additional games?

## Meow Talk Translator

Have you ever wondered what exactly your cat is trying to tell you? Well, if you download the Meow Talk Translator, you might be able to find out! This app allows you to create different profiles for your cats, and you can correct it if you believe it's giving you the wrong translation.

The bad thing is that you'll need to pay to truly get the best out of this app. The good thing is that it actually seems to work. In fact, it currently has a 4.5-star average out of more than 18,000 reviews on the iOS store. The Android version, meanwhile, doesn't work nearly as well. It only has a 2.5-star average.

## Cat Alone 2



This handy app allows your cat to take the basics from Mouse for Cats into a new direction. Your cat (or you) can choose to paw at one of three different objects: feathers, a tarantula, or shining lights. This exciting cat game also gives you the ability to change

up their routine by selecting 15-, 30-, or 60-second intervals.

Of course, the best part of this app is that it also includes a selfie mode. So while your kitty is having a blast, he can also be taking selfies of himself. And who doesn't want to see that?!?

## Cat Fishing 2

Do you want to give your cat a game to play but don't want her to accidentally purchase something? Cat Fishing 2 is your answer! This game is completely free with no add-ons. If your feline friend loves to try to bat at fish, this will give her the opportunity to do so.

One of the best things about this free app is that the number of fish on screen will change as your cat makes her way through the various levels. Beware, though – unless you've got a screen protector on your tablet, it might end up getting scratched.

## Cat Games - Games For Cats

Cat Games - Games for Cats can be downloaded for free, but if you want your kitty to be able to take full advantage of this game, you'll need to pay \$4.99. That's a good deal, though, as it comes with 12 unique games! The games include:

- Mouse
- Bat
- Hamster
- Eagle
- Furry
- Fox
- Fly
- Alien
- Fish
- Butterfly
- White mouse
- Bee



The best way to let your cat play these games is by putting a screen protector in place first, along with placing your tablet or phone on a soft surface. This will prevent your device from getting scratched and from flying off the table as your cat gets really into it.

## PetCube App



Have you ever wanted to play with your cat when you're not home? Well, that's exactly what the PetCube app allows you to do! The PetCube Play 2 camera comes equipped with a built-in laser toy. You can easily move the laser around the room by simply dragging your finger across your smartphone screen.

Want to try out the PetCube app but don't have the PetCube camera? No problem! Search the app for public/shared feeds, and select a cat to interact with.

## Cat Alone

Although it's not quite as fun as Cat Alone 2, this free app gives your feline friend eight different stages to conquer. Your cat can choose between several different things to paw at, including:

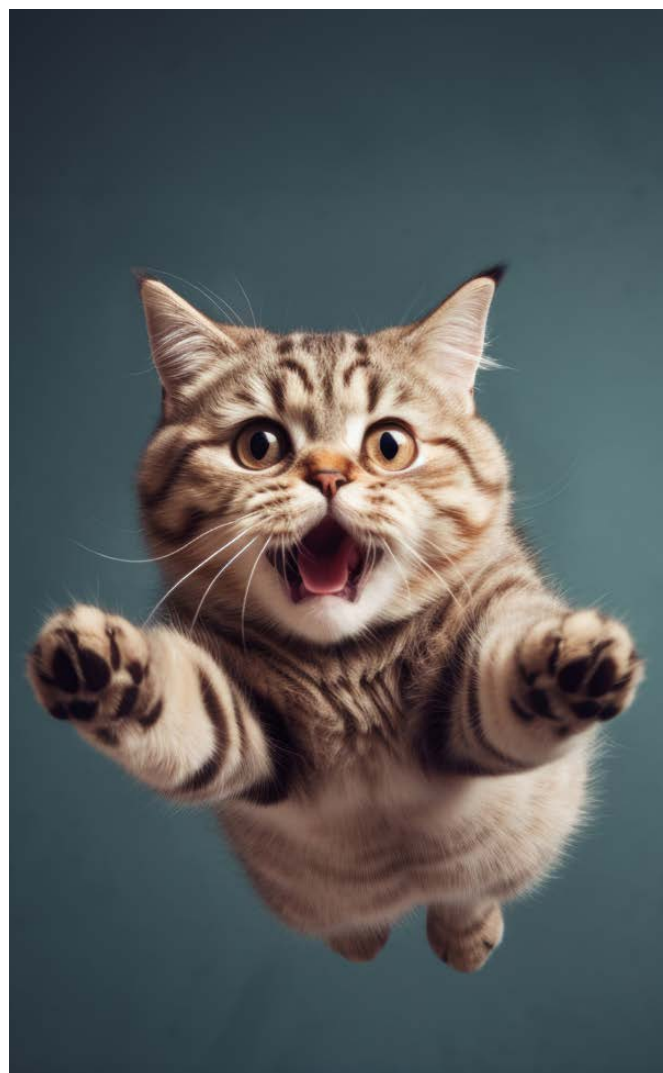
- Laser pointer
- Finger
- Flies
- Cockroaches
- Ladybirds
- Butterflies
- Lizards
- Larvae

The one thing that might end up distracting your kitty in Cat Alone is that there are ads that play from time to time. This also means that your cat might accidentally purchase something, unless you keep an eye on them or turn on the mode that necessitates entering your password before buying something.

## Final Thoughts

As you can see, there are several different ways for your cat to stay entertained. Whether you choose to play fetch or tag with him – or choose to set him up with your tablet so he can play Mouse for Cats or Cat Alone 2 – the end result will be a happier, more mentally stimulated cat.

BONUS: Sometimes, when we play with a cat, he or she will become extra hyper. What can you do to help them unwind? Technology comes to the rescue again! All you have to do is put on Spotify or YouTube and play some “music for cats.” They'll soon pass out, even if they're trying to stay awake!





We know that you love your cat as if he or she was a human member of your family. But do you know what to do if your feline friend has a medical emergency? You can't call 911 because they only take care of human emergencies, and what happens if your closest emergency vet is located more than five minutes from your home?

A lot of pet owners never take the time to think this through until they end up in a situation where they really need to know. And that's the absolute worst time to be looking up instructions, as you'll likely have too much adrenaline pumping to truly take it in.

The good news is that we're going to deal with this issue right now, while it's still easy to receive the important information that you may or may not ever need to use. Trying to learn new skills when you're not so emotionally involved is always a good idea. So, read on and learn how you could save your cat's life during an emergency situation.

## WHAT IS FIRST AID, REALLY?

If you were to ask 10 people what first aid is, we're guessing you'd get 10 different answers. Everyone understands the basic concept, but not all of them understand how to put it into practice. Therefore, before we move on, let's take a quick moment to define it.

At its core, first aid is simply the initial treatment you'd give to your cat during an emergency. As to its purpose, first aid for cats is meant to:

- Preserve your cat's life
- Reduce any discomfort or pain
- Minimize the risk of a permanent disfigurement and/or disability

When given successfully, first aid can keep your cat alive long enough for you to get them to a vet for more extensive care.

## WHAT STEPS SHOULD I FOLLOW DURING AN EMERGENCY?



## FIRST AID FOR FIFI

The very first thing you need to do is take a quick look around. This will give you a chance to look for any additional threats that you and/or your cat is facing. Next, you'll want to do three things:

- Keep your kitty warm, unless they're suffering from heat stroke.
- Keep your kitty as quiet as possible.
- Keep your kitty's movements to a minimum.

All three of the things listed above can be accomplished by wrapping your kitty in a blanket or towel.

Next, you should contact your local veterinary hospital to receive any specific first aid advice. Contacting them is also a good way to prepare the hospital for whatever your kitty is dealing with. Once you've hung up and given any first aid that's necessary, it'll be time to take your cat to the vet.

Safely moving an ill or injured cat will require you to use a cat carrier or a strong cardboard box. However, you must be able to remove the top portion of the carrier. NEVER attempt to push an injured kitty through a small opening or door. If you haven't done so already, be sure to place a warm towel or blanket over your cat.



You've done everything you can, and now they're safely in a cat carrier. It's time to get to the vet hospital as quickly as you can (but don't violate road safety rules).

## HOW CAN I SAFELY RESTRAIN MY HURT/SICK CAT?



It doesn't matter that you've built a solid relationship with your feline friend. If he or she is suffering from an emergency, they'll most likely be disoriented and/or panicked. They might even lash out aggressively, but please do not take it personally or react in anger.

What you can do, however, is speak to them in a soothing, calm voice. This will help them realize that you're trying to assist them. Still, you may want to drape a towel over your cat's head. Alternatively, if they're unmanageable or frightened, wrap their body up in a towel or blanket.

Do NOT constrict their airway or trachea in any way. If your cat is calm enough, be sure to leave their head exposed. Also, always use a big box to transport a cat if you suspect they have a spinal injury.

## WHAT DOES SHOCK MEAN?

Medically speaking, to go into shock means they're having a whole-body reaction. This can happen if they're suffering from heart failure, severe trauma, sudden blood loss, an allergic reaction, heatstroke, etc. If their blood pressure suddenly drops, you'll need to be extra careful because this is a life-threatening situation.

Lots of people have seen others go into shock in TV shows and movies, but you have to remind yourself that what is depicted isn't realistic. In fact, if your cat isn't treated for shock effectively and quickly, they could end up with an irreversible injury to their body cells. Sadly, in some cases, this is fatal.

### Signs Of Shock

Anytime your cat is injured, check them for the following signs:

- Rapid breathing (may be noisy)
- Rapid heart rate
- Weak pulse
- Pale gums, lips, and/or under eyelids
- Severe depression/listlessness
- Cool ears and/or limbs
- Vomiting

## WHAT ARE THE ABCS OF SHOCK?

Keeping your kitty calm and quiet while trying to conserve their heat is a good place to start. Next, perform the A-B-Cs:

**A** = Airway

**B** = Breathing

**C** = Cardiac function

### Airway

Clear their mouth and throat of any possible obstructions, including saliva, vomit, etc. This will allow air to keep entering their lungs. Be aware that your cat might bite you due to being panicked. It isn't their fault, though.

### Breathing

If your cat doesn't appear to be breathing or is unconscious, feel just below their elbow to feel their pulse/heartbeat. At the same time, use the palm of your hand to gently pump their chest. Again, be aware that your cat might bite you.



If you are unaware of the cat's vaccination or health status, avoid contact with any blood or other bodily fluids.

## Cardiac Function

If the cat has a weak—or no—pulse or heartbeat, it's important to try pressing on their chest with your palm. At the same time, elevate the lower portion of their body. This will help get blood flow to their brain.

## HOW TO PERFORM RESCUE BREATHING ON YOUR CAT



If your cat is still unresponsive after you've done the A-B-Cs, make sure they still have a clear airway. Then you can begin rescue breathing.

- Pull their tongue carefully out of their mouth.
- Extend their neck and head until they're in a straight line (NOTE: Do NOT do this to any animal that has obvious neck or head trauma).
- Look for any debris in their mouth, and be sure to clear all of it.
- Put your hand over your cat's muzzle (meaning their nose, lips, and chin). At the same time, extend their neck and hold their mouth closed. Ensure that there is a relatively tight seal around their muzzle.
- Blow into their nostrils two to three times. Watch for their chest to rise. If it doesn't, search again for any mouth obstructions and reposition their neck. Keep providing rescue breathing at a rate of 10 breaths every minute.
- At this point, if your cat still isn't breathing, there is an acupressure maneuver you can try.

Take a hard, dull object (such as your fingernail), and press it firmly between their upper lip and the nostrils. Continue pressing for 10–30 seconds.

PLEASE NOTE: If you happen to have a Styrofoam cup handy, you can use it to avoid touching their nostrils with your mouth. Poke a large hole in the bottom of the cup, and put the opening of this hole over their muzzle area. Breathe into the cup, rather than breathing directly into their nostrils.

## WHAT IF RESCUE BREATHING DOESN'T WORK?

You've tried rescue breathing—as listed above—but your kitty still doesn't show any signs of life. It's time to try chest compressions (CPR).

- Check for bleeding. If there is any, have an assistant manage the bleeding while you perform CPR.
- If it's possible, lay your cat onto his or her right side.
- Feel for their femoral pulse. This is located inside their leg, in the groin region. This is necessary because cats do not have a readily accessible neck pulse.
- Bend their left forearm, and be sure to note the area where their elbow touches their chest. It should be right around their middle rib cage.
- Put your thumb on one side of their chest, and your fingers on the opposite side. Compress their chest between 100 and 120 times per minute. You want to keep the rate around 30 compressions for every two breaths you take.
- You should try to compress their chest wall 30–50%. On an average sized cat, this is about one inch.

PLEASE NOTE: If CPR works and your cat recovers, you might not think that they need to go to the vet. However, this would be a mistake. Any time your cat has a medical emergency, always be sure to take them to their vet as soon as you can. There could be an underlying cause that only your vet will catch.



## WHAT HAPPENS IF MY CAT HAS AN INJURY, BUT SEEMS OKAY?



Even when your cat is acting relatively normal, any injuries they have need to be addressed right away. This should be done by a vet in most cases. However, if you feel confident that you can help, you could try the following.

- Clean up any minor wounds using warm water, then dry the area with a wad of paper towels or a soft kitchen towel. If needed, you may use a mild salt water solution. Do NOT use disinfectants, as some are toxic to cats.
- Deep injuries should be treated with a hot compress. You can either use a kitchen towel as a compress or put them in an Epsom salt soak for five minutes.
- Only apply salves and topical creams that are recommended by your vet.

Of course, it's important to remember that if your cat tries to bite you, it's probably best to simply take him or her to the vet for treatment.

## SPECIAL NUTRITION FOR INJURED CATS

Another reason why you should always take your cat to the vet after they get an injury is that they might have special nutrition needs as they recover. This can be especially true if they start refusing to eat, or if they're suffering from gastrointestinal issues.

## HOW CAN I TELL IF HEALING ISN'T GOING WELL?

develop any of the following signs, be sure to take them back to the vet.

- Hiding
- Lethargy
- Urinating outside their litter box
- Constipation or diarrhea
- Vomiting

Additionally, you'll need to keep an eye on their stitches. Because cats have sharp claws and raspy tongues, they could easily induce an infection or even remove their stitches. Signs to watch for include:

- Swelling
- Discharge
- Redness
- Foul smell

Once again, if they develop these or any other issues, you'll need to take them back to the vet ASAP.

## ALWAYS FOLLOW YOUR VET'S WOUND CARE INSTRUCTIONS

You'll need to pay extremely close attention to the wound care instructions that you're given by your vet, especially if your cat has an open wound, surgical site, or stitches.

You must prevent them from scratching or licking their wounds. If your vet gives them a protective collar, do NOT remove it unless your vet says it's okay. In fact, the only time you should loosen their collar or cone is if you can clearly tell that it's restricting their airflow.

Sadly, once you've loosened their cone or collar, they might be able to wiggle out of it. You must tell your vet ASAP if this happens. And remember: there is a reason that your vet put the cone on your cat. Taking it off prematurely is a good way to make their injury worse.

If your cat is bandaged up, you must ensure that their bandages stay dry and clean. This means that if they get stool, litter, or urine smeared on their bandage, you **MUST** replace it right away. Ditto for water. Find out if your vet will show you how to replace the bandages. If they opt not to, you'll need to take your kitty back to the vet as soon as they get any water, urine, litter, or stool on their bandages.

Something else you should keep an eye on is whether they develop any new swelling. If they appear to be swelling where they have the bandage, this is an indicator that it may be wrapped too tightly. It may also be a problem if their wound is oozing or red. Before you remove their bandage, though, be sure to contact your vet.

The last thing you should do to help your cat heal is always give them their medication exactly as prescribed. This can be difficult, as cats don't tend to do a very good job when it comes to taking pills. It's important, though, so don't let it slide.

## HOW DO I KNOW IF MY CAT IS INJURED WITHOUT A WOUND SITE?



Honestly, it can be extremely difficult to tell when your cat is nursing a hidden injury. Cats are notorious for hiding their pain, which is part of the reason why they should go to the vet at least once per year. However, there are a few indicators that your cat may give you if they are injured or ill.

- Sitting hunched up and still
- Hiding
- Loss of interest in people, activities, and/or other pets

- Neglecting to groom
- Over-grooming in one specific area
- Excessive meowing, purring, or unusual vocalizations
- Aggression or restlessness toward friendly surroundings
- Going to the bathroom outside of their litter box

If your cat happens to be a young kitten, they may also exhibit:

- Unusual vomiting
- Loss of appetite
- Clingy behavior

Another thing to watch out for is if they stop jumping or climbing. Doing this—especially in conjunction with not using their litter box—can be a prime indicator that they're suffering from arthritis.

## HOW CAN I HELP A CAT WITH ARTHRITIS?

If you suspect that your cat has arthritis, you can take a few steps to make everything easier on them. First, take a look at where you've located their water, food, and litter box. Are they difficult to access? Consider moving them to a more open area. You'll also want to ensure that their litter box is as easy as possible to get in and out of. Consider getting a new box that has an open, shallow structure.

## FINAL THOUGHTS

We've covered a lot of different situations in this article, ranging from a traumatic injury all the way to arthritis. Whether you have to do CPR on your cat or need to make adjustments to your home environment, there is almost always a solution for whatever ails your feline friend. Just remember: in every emergency, take them to the vet right away. Early intervention almost always helps a cat recover more quickly and safely.



You've got a cute little ball of fur, but he's also very destructive. He bites, claws, scratches, and constantly knocks things over. What causes his behavior? Well, we hate to say this, but it's most likely something you did. Or, more accurately, something you didn't do. You see, cats who are bored are likely to become destructive.

## WHY IS MY CAT BORED?

Think through your daily routine. How much time are you spending with your feline friend? Do you make sure she gets at least 30 minutes of exercise per day? Have you fallen into the trap of believing that because she's independent, that she doesn't need you?

The truth is that she needs you to check in on her occasionally – and while you do, you should give her attention and love. It's also a good idea to play fetch with her daily because it will let her burn off some excess energy.

## COULD SOMETHING ELSE BE WRONG?

Of course, it's possible that you pay tons of attention to your furry friend and still find him to be super destructive. So, if he's not bored over a lack of attention and/or exercise, what could the problem be? There are a few different possibilities:

- Changes to their environment
- New addition to your home
- Illness or injury
- Fleas or ticks

If your cat gets extra squirrely whenever something changes in his environment, you should be careful about how often—and what type—of changes you make. Humans don't seem to think this through from their cat's perspective, but one thing that's been proven time and time again is that cats don't like change.

For instance, if you decide to move your cat's bed and then he starts to act out, try putting the bed back where it used to be. This is a simple fix, and it's quite likely that he'll stop his destructive behaviors.



## TRAINING TIPS: HOW TO STOP DESTRUCTIVE BEHAVIORS

When it comes to a new addition to your home, it's likely that there is nothing you can do to permanently fix the problem. After all, you're not going to give your baby away to appease your cat. However, if you make sure to give both of your babies some attention—meaning your human and cat babies—it can make his behavior improve.

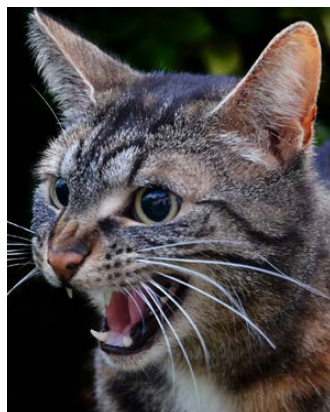
Remember: he's acting out because he no longer feels secure in his role. It's up to you to give him his sense of security back.

Anytime a cat's behavior changes, it's always wise to check them over for any injuries. If that's not the issue, then he could be sick. Keep in mind that cats are almost eerily good at hiding when something is wrong, but they will give you some indication of how they're feeling with their behavior.

Finally, if he's been generally restless, start paying closer attention to him. Is he also constantly grooming, biting/scratching himself, and displaying aggressive behaviors? These are all prime indicators that he might have fleas and/or ticks. Be sure to give his fur a really close look. If you notice any intruders, get him a flea and tick treatment immediately.

## HOW TO PREVENT BOREDOM AND, THEREFORE, DESTRUCTIVE BEHAVIORS

A bored kitty can turn your house into an endless array of destructive behaviors. Rather than getting mad at him or attempting to punish him, what you want to do is transform your cat from bored to happy. There are several ways that you can achieve this goal, and we'll look at a few of them below.



### Spend More One-On-One Time With Your Cat

It's easy to place the blame on your cat, but the reality is that he's probably acting out because you don't spend enough time with him. Unlike humans, he doesn't have the ability to tell you how he's feeling. Therefore, he's going to do whatever it takes to get your attention.

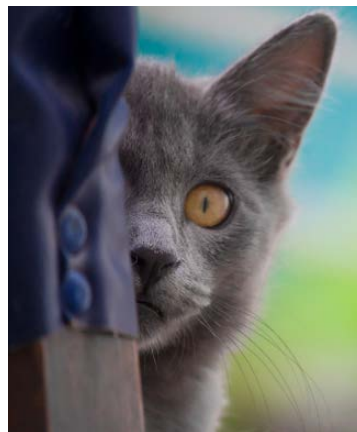
You know how people talk about a human child? They'll say that he or she doesn't care whether they get good attention or bad attention, as long as they're getting any attention at all. The same is true of your feline friend. To curb this tendency, you must spend more time together. Yes, this means playing, but it also means simply hanging out together.

If you're at home right now, we want you to try something. Step away from this article for five minutes and go show your cat some love. As long as she's not sleeping or hunting, we can guarantee you that spending a mere five minutes with her is going to brighten her mood—and it should brighten yours too!

Also, don't forget that your cat needs playtime with you on a daily basis. Whether this means playing fetch—or, in my cat's case, playing catch, but never bringing the toy back—or using a string, feather, or laser pointer, interacting with her in this way will fulfill some of her need to play. Be sure to provide

self-play toys as well, but don't rely solely on them. Again, despite the common misconception, your cat absolutely needs special time with you.

### Accept That Your Cat Is A Nocturnal Animal



Yes, in a perfect world, your cat would adjust his schedule to yours. But this isn't a perfect world, and your cat's nocturnal tendencies come from his natural instincts. When he gets the zoomies or goes 'hunting' in the middle of the

night, he is NOT trying to annoy you. Instead, he's simply doing what comes naturally to him.

There are a few different things you can do to reduce his nighttime tendencies. Try any of the following:

- Provide stimulating self-play toys
- Don't let your cat into your room at night
- Play with him before bedtime
- Be patient and understanding

Cats hunt. There is nothing you can do about it, so you might as well steer into the skid. Rather than yelling at him for displaying his natural hunting instincts, give him a few self-play toys to hunt. Be sure that the toys are all safe to use when you're not around. You can also place these toys in the room that's farthest from where you sleep, so he can hunt without disturbing your sleep.

If you really, truly can't sleep because your cat keeps busting into your room, you could try making your bedroom a no-go zone at night. Some cats will respect this, but others won't. For example, if your cat stands outside your bedroom and howls all night, it's not going to help anyone.

Personally, I let my cat come into my room at night. I've made a few alterations, though, that make the process much easier for me and my



cat. First, I've got a curtain hanging over the door frame. That way, my cat can come in and out of the room without causing the door to squeak.

Secondly, I've got a small table set up next to the window. I hide it behind curtains, but my boy can easily get onto it. He's even gotten quite adept at making sure that the curtains close behind him. This gives him the opportunity to watch all sorts of nighttime critters without bothering me.

I also leave self-play toys in the living room, along with some food and plenty of water. Because of this, his natural instincts are sated, and he spends part of each night cuddled up to me in bed. I've given him the best of both worlds, and he takes full advantage of it. Meanwhile, I get a good night's sleep.

Another proven technique you can try is to schedule playtime right before bed. More than half of all cats sleep for 12 to 18 hours per day—and another 40% sleep more than 18 hours. Therefore, if you give them 15–30 minutes of vigorous play before bedtime, they're probably going to conk out for at least a few hours after.

Finally, adjusting your expectations for your cat can help both of you sleep better. Instead of expecting him to comply with human instincts, try to be kind and patient with him. He's really not doing things to purposely annoy you or to prevent you from sleeping, after all.

Just as you might listen to your TV too loudly and disturb his rest—and wow, will he give you a look if you do this—he might run down your hallway at 3 a.m. and wake you up. Neither of you intended to do something wrong, so don't try to punish him for doing what comes naturally. What you could do, though, is review the steps that came before this one to see if you can adjust his behavior through much nicer means.

## USE DIFFERENT TOYS AT DIFFERENT TIMES

Cats like to have their own objects and love for them to be toys. This doesn't mean that your cat will automatically like the first toy you buy for

them, though. Try all the basic toys, including catnip infused toys and fetch toys. You'll eventually find one that metaphorically knocks your cat's socks off!

Once you've got a nice selection of cat toys, it's up to you to ensure that your cat doesn't grow bored of them. You can do this by switching the toys up on a semi-regular basis. If your cat is really into a specific toy for a week or so and then starts to ignore it, put it away and bring out a different one. This should reinvigorate his instincts to play.

Be aware that using a laser pointer may or may not work for your cat. The problem is that they can never truly catch the red dot, which causes some cats to feel anxious. You also need to ensure that the laser never gets into their eyes. Take it easy with them and give them the laser pointer only on rare occasions to keep it interesting.

Did you know that some cats enjoy chewing on things? This is typically seen as more of a dog behavior, but there are many cats who also like doing it. The good news is that there are dental chews that are made specifically for cats! Therefore, if your feline friend loves to chew on stuff, get him some dental chews.

## Window Time Will Mentally Enrich Your Cat

If there's one thing that pretty much every cat on the planet has in common, it's that they love to admire nature. In fact, if you haven't set up a place where your cat can gaze out the window, you should take care of it immediately. Giving your feline buddy the ability to observe the antics of your neighborhood birds, squirrels, and chipmunks will keep them happily entertained—sometimes for hours!

As you read in a previous section, I've taken care of my cat's need to view wildlife by putting a table in front of my bedroom window. I've also given him a cat tree in the living room that's in front of the window. He spends several hours per day watching the neighborhood. When he really gets into it, he begins to chatter at all of the wildlife he wishes he could hunt and kill.



When the weather is warm enough, I'll move his smaller cat tower so he can look out the screen door. Opening the door's screen allows him to not only watch the birds, but to also hear and smell them.

This drives him absolutely wild, and he's spent hours doing this before.

**Special Note:** If you can't give your cat regular access to a window, set him or her up with a tablet and play a bird video. The best way to find these is to go to YouTube and look up "cat TV." Just be sure to keep an eye on him the first couple of times. That way, you'll be able to tell if he tends to touch the screen or not, and then you can adjust accordingly.

## Give Them A Scratching Post

One behavior that owners absolutely hate is the near-constant scratching, especially in areas where they absolutely shouldn't be scratching. Fortunately, it's relatively easy to get them to switch from clawing at your furniture or carpet to clawing on a scratching post.

Don't ask us how your cat always seems to know when something is for her because we don't honestly know. What we do know is that once you put a scratching post in the area, they're going to begin using it. And, if you encourage them to use their post—while discouraging them from clawing other objects—they'll begin to gravitate more toward the post. Praise them for using it enough times, and your furniture won't seem all that interesting to them anymore.

## Feed Them Strategically

Whether your cat is completely food obsessed or doesn't really seem to care, you can use feeding time strategically to help reduce boredom and anxiety, along with building a consistent routine. Do the following to make them—and yourself—happier:

- Puzzle and treat dispensing cat toys
- Schedule their mealtime

Imitating their natural instincts is always a good idea, and using puzzle and treat dispensing toys will help you do it. Rather than allowing them the time to get into mischief, giving them a puzzle treat to solve will prevent them from becoming bored. Let them forage for their favorite treats and some kibble. It'll take longer than eating out of their bowl, and they'll feel satisfied once they get the treat or kibble out.

Some owners prefer to let their cats graze all day, and that's okay. Other owners prefer to schedule mealtimes, and that's good, too. The benefits of scheduling their meal times may outweigh the drawbacks, however.

For instance, if you schedule when you're going to feed them, it can help you deal with some of their excess energy. It might even get them to keep a schedule that's closer to yours! Additionally, feeding them at pre-scheduled times can be a good way to help them maintain muscle mass and a healthy weight.

Of course, if your cat constantly bugs you for more food, giving them a slow feeder and/or some treat dispensing toys just might work best for you. When it comes to feeding time, there is no one right answer. Listen and look for your cat's signals, and you'll know what's right for both of you.

## FINAL THOUGHTS

Having a cat that's destroying your home is no fun for anyone, including your cat. While you might believe that your cat is being destructive to hurt or upset you, that's quite simply not the case. Instead, your feline friend is trying to give you some insight into what's going on with them.

Any time your cat begins to do destructive things, take a look at what you might have changed recently. Perhaps you got a new job and you're not home as often. Regardless, try to track down the source of their unhappiness so that you can put a much-needed change in place. Your cat will thank you!





## Myth Buster: The Dish On Cat Dishes

It used to be that humans simply fed cats out of whatever bowl or plate they had handy—or even just handed them some scraps. Over time, though, specific cat dishes made their debut. But first, let's back up a bit.

Canned cat food became commercially available in the 1930s, but pets were deemed non-essential for meat during WWII, which means that the market shifted to dry food. It wasn't until the 1950s and 60s that companies began to come out with their “human grade” cat food. In 1964, the Pet Food Institute began a campaign to let owners know that table scraps were not giving cats the necessary nutrition they need.

As you can see, if you'd had a cat a mere 100 years ago, you wouldn't have had any commercial food options. It's kind of hard to imagine when you consider how many options you have now. As with lots of other things such as women's shaving options, the last 100 years or so have been huge from an innovative standpoint.

Once cats and their owners became used to the idea of buying pet food at the store, it was only natural for cat bowls to come next. Initially, this meant small sized bowls that sat on the ground. Although this took care of the problem of where to put their

food, that's about all it did. More recently, however, cat bowls have changed to meet your feline friend's needs more appropriately.

### A Modern Take On An Old Problem

The first thing that modern cat food companies will tell you about cat dishes is that you shouldn't use the old-fashioned bowl style anymore. Why's that, you ask? It comes down to whisker fatigue. In other words, cats use their whiskers to receive input about the world around them.

In fact, whiskers can even help ensure that he understands the width of doorways, holes, etc. Having a bowl that constantly touches his whiskers can be distracting, in the best case scenario. In the worst case scenario, it could put him off his food altogether.

So, what ARE you supposed to feed them out of, then? First off, you CAN use a shallow dish or bowl, as long as it doesn't make your feline friend's whiskers feel hemmed in. Alternatively, using a plate makes a lot of sense.

## Elevate Their Dishes

Cats have naturally dropped their bodies down to eat their food for centuries. However, it might interest you to know that this is not the healthiest way for them to eat. Instead, you'll want to place her food dish closer to her mouth. Purchasing a cat stand—or making your own—that raises her plate even a couple of inches off the ground will make a big difference.

You should take your cat's height into account when you put the stand in place. A normal sized cat will probably love it if you give her a 2–3" advantage. If your cat is ginormous, though, you're going to need to elevate her food by at least 6" so that she can eat it without hunkering down.

Is your cat unhappy or anxious while she eats? Perhaps she leaves a big mess behind once she's done? Both of these are indicators that something may not be right. Try raising her plate and see if it fixes the problem. Odds are high that it will!

## What's The Best Place To Put My Cat's Dishes?



Whatever you do, don't put your cat's dishes in the corner of a room. This becomes even more important if you've got multiple cats or a dog. Your cat won't be able to comfortably eat this way because they can't watch their own back. Instead, try to give him open sight lines when you position his dishes.

Something else you should be aware of is that cat's actually prefer to have their water dish placed somewhere apart from their food dish. In nature, a cat assumes that any water placed right next to their food must have become contaminated. Although they will drink if that's the option you give them, they'll be much happier if you set their dishes in different parts of the room.

Another thing to note is that you absolutely should NEVER place your cat's food or water bowl next to her litter box. It might make sense in your human brain to do this because you're making an area for your cat to be. However, think it through as if you were your cat, and you'll be able to see why it's so gross to do this. After all, cats are clean creatures, and they do not want to smell pee or poop while they're eating, even if it is theirs.

## Feeding Affection: What Is It And Should It Worry You?

Does your cat prefer to have you watch her hindquarters when she eats? If so, she's relying on you to do your job and protect her from any predators. Speak to her while she's eating, and be sure to offer lots of praise. This will make her feel more confident!

Maybe your cat takes this a little bit further, though. For example, my cat Riley is a HUGE fan of feeding affection, but only when he's eating dry food. Feeding affection means that your cat wants to be petted and sweet talked while he eats. It often stems from some type of anxiety.

When Riley was first introduced into my home, he had been a stray cat, and he had to deal with a senior cat who already lived here. When you put those two factors together, you've got an instant recipe for a cat who feels a little insecure about eating his food safely. Six years later, he's the only cat left, but he still acts this way. The difference, however, is that he also seems to feel much, much happier. At this point, I think he's simply adjusted to having me watch him eat, and that's what he prefers.

Again, this behavior may start with having their food dish in an inopportune spot. After all, if they can't see what's behind them, they're going to need you to



make them feel more comfortable when they eat. Otherwise, they may choose not to eat.

It's worth noting that feeding affection can also occasionally happen when a cat is constipated. So, if your feline friend never cared whether you watched him eat before but suddenly does, you may want to take him to the vet.

## What Should You Look For In A Cat Dish?



According to Dr. Danielle Rosenberg, who works at the Boston Veterinary Clinic as an associate veterinarian, the best cat dishes are made from stainless steel, and they're also shaped to reduce whisker fatigue. They should be shallow and wide, as long as your cat isn't a super messy eater. If your cat is picky, you may want to go with a plate-like shape instead.

As far as materials go, Dr. Rosenberg is a big proponent of using stainless steel, due to the fact that they're easier to clean and are nonporous. Another perk of using stainless steel is that the majority of them can be placed in the dishwasher. If you choose to use ceramic dishes instead, be sure to replace them if they get chips and/or cracks.

Of course, Dr. Rosenberg also suggests using an elevated bowl, especially if you've got an older cat. If your cat is messy, she also recommends using a washable mat underneath the bowl.

As far as water goes, Dr. Rosenberg says that using a fountain-style waterer is typically the best way to go. Please note, however, that some cats can't get over their suspicion of fountains. For those cats, we

suggest getting an automatic pet water dispenser. These will refill themselves when they're empty, but they don't stay constantly running.

## Don't Get Plastic Dishes

There may be lots of inexpensive plastic bowls on the market, but DON'T purchase one as a food bowl. When you use a plastic bowl, you're taking the risk of it getting scratched and leaving crevices that are basically impossible to get completely clean.

Once a crevice is left behind, bacteria can grow in it, which is a big health risk for your feline friend. It's also possible for cats to develop chin acne if they use a plastic bowl for long enough.

However, if you're shopping for a water fountain for your cat, it IS okay to purchase a plastic one. They can actually be much cheaper than the alternatives, and they work great! Just be careful if your cat tends to get rowdy, as they might just tip it over.

## The Style Really Matters

Again, cats do NOT like to drink their water from the same area they eat their food. Therefore, using a double dish set isn't a good idea unless you feed them both wet and dry food.

Make sure that the bowl in question has a non-slip bottom. Otherwise, you might have to clean up a mess each time they eat.

## The Design Also Really Matters

You might not realize it, but the aesthetic design of a cat bowl also matters a lot. The design, color, and shape of the bowl all come into play. Also, if you choose to microwave their food, make sure you're using a microwave-safe dish.

Aside from making sure the bowl is wide enough to avoid whisker fatigue, you'll want it to sit up off the ground. We've said this many times, but what does it actually mean? Well, when a cat stoops over to eat, her mouth will often move below her stomach. This makes swallowing food more difficult and hurts their digestion. Therefore, elevating their bowl just makes sense.

Finally, you'll want to ensure you've selected a bowl that's easy to clean. Although many people don't do it, you should really be cleaning your cat's bowl at least once a day.

## What Cat Dishes Work The Best?

Now, we're going to take a look at a few cat bowls available that will work best for cats.

### Y YHY Tilted Cat Bowls



This bowl made USA Today's 'Best Cat Bowls of 2023' list, and I was happy to see it because it's the same one I purchased for Riley two years ago. As you can see, it's got a wide opening and isn't too deep, which works well with his whiskers.

This bowl is ideal for older cats—along with cats who are very tall. I have to raise mine up another 4–6" (he's really huge!), but people with smaller cats probably won't find this to be necessary.

What your cat will like about it:

- Tilt angle design
- Elevated bowl helps prevent vomiting
- Reduced neck burden
- Wide, stable base makes food easy to get to

What you will like about it:

- Dishwasher safe
- Microwave safe
- Affordable
- Your cat won't make a big mess

### FOREYY Elevated Cat Bowls

As you can see, this cat bowl set also comes with tiny stainless steel bowls. Due to whisker fatigue, though, we're going to suggest you put the stainless steel bowls away and focus only on the ceramic

ones. That's because the ceramic bowls are big but not deep, and this should help your cat steer clear of whisker fatigue.



What your cat will like about it:

- Comes with a sturdy stand, which makes it easier to eat
- Reduces neck burden
- Helps with digestion and less vomiting
- Helps with posture

What you will like about it:

- Dishwasher safe
- Microwave safe
- Affordable
- Easy to clean

### PetSafe Smart Feed



If you're looking for a self-feeding bowl—and you want it to be electric—there aren't many options that can beat this one. In fact, the PetSafe Smart Feed took home the 2020 Pet Innovation Award in the category of Electronic Feeders/Waterers Product of the Year.

One thing that truly sets it apart is that it not only uses wifi, but it also comes with backup batteries. That way, if something unexpected happens to the wifi connection, your cat will still be able to get food! Additionally, you can schedule up to 12 feedings per day, and they can each range from 1/8 cup all the way to 4 cups.



What your cat will like about it:

- It keeps them fed, even when you're not there
- 24 cup capacity
- Helps them avoid eating too quickly

What you will like about it:

- Dishwasher safe
- Lets you feed your cat via the My SafeCat app
- Sends smartphone notifications if the food runs out
- You can ask Alexa to feed your cat
- Compatible with Amazon Dash Replacement

## PETKIT Raised Cat Food Bowls



Using titled bowls such as the ones that come with this product from PETKIT is a fantastic way to make them less likely to vomit. It also reduces the pressure that's placed on a cat's neck when it stoops down to eat. Even better, the bowls easily lock in place, so you don't have to worry about them moving while your kitty is eating.

The only negative thing about this set is that some people have stated that the base won't last. If that happens to you, you'll still have the stainless steel bowls to work with.

What your cat will like about it:

- The wide, deep shape helps prevent whisker fatigue
- Reduces the risk of vomiting
- Helps with digestion

What you will like about it:

- Dishwasher safe
- Easy to remove for cleaning
- The bowls prevent food spillage
- Affordable

## FUKUMARU Elevated Cat Ceramic Bowls



This elevated set includes food grade ceramic bowls, and the bamboo portion of the stand has been coated with a varnish to make it waterproof. It also has a 15° elevated and tilted bowl, so

your cat won't have to worry about suffering from undo neck pressure any longer.

One of the absolute best things about this particular set is that it's made for messy eaters! It also won't cause them whisker fatigue because it's only 1.7" deep but 5.1" wide. All in all, this is simply a fantastic option for cats that will allow them to eat more peacefully.

What your cat will like about it:

- The tilted angle
- Reduced risk of vomiting and neck strain
- They won't have to stoop too low to reach it

What you will like about it:

- Easy to clean
- Study, slipless base
- Dishwasher safe
- Microwave safe

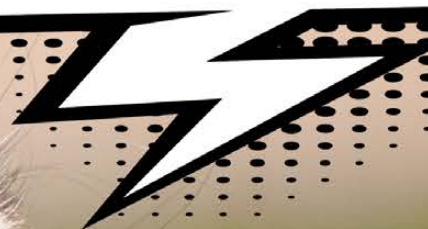
## Final Thoughts

Pet behaviorists—and a generally more open-minded approach to pet care—have put cats in a very different place than they were 100 years ago. It is well-known now that cats have a variety of different emotions, and that they really grow attached to their favorite people. And, as someone once said, when you know better, you do better.

That's been behind the push for better cat products, as well as studying cats to learn more about what makes them tick. There has never been a better time in history for understanding cats. Use this knowledge to their advantage!



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