

Exercising Your Cat

- Regular exercise is important to your cat's health because it burns calories, reduces appetite, maintains muscle tone, and increases metabolism (the rate at which calories are burned).
- You can help your cat become more active and stay fit by scheduling regular playtimes.
- Consult your veterinarian before beginning an exercise program for your cat.
- Train your cat to do tricks for low-calorie or small treats (e.g., train your cat to run to you from across the house or climb a cat "tree" when you shake the treat container; reward your cat with just one treat)
- Provide specially designed activity toys that require your cat to do some work to remove a treat

Cats are notorious for preferring sleep to exercise. However, regular exercise is important to your cat's health because it burns calories, reduces appetite, maintains muscle tone, and increases metabolism (the rate at which calories are burned). Here are some ideas to get your cat moving:

- Leave out tissue paper and empty cardboard boxes and paper bags to inspire play
- Provide fresh catnip
- Encourage your cat to chase toys, sticks with attached feathers, balls, or flashlight pointers (never point these at an animal's or person's eyes)
- Provide a cat tree to inspire climbing
- Provide scratching posts or pads
- Encourage play with other pets (set up play dates with the pets of friends or relatives; consider adopting another pet)

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Note: Choose cat toys carefully. Cats may try to eat string or small parts of toys, which can be dangerous to their health. Do not leave toys out for cats to play with unattended.

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