



# AGING CATS: Physical Needs

## Watch for Signs of Illnesses AND Have an Ongoing Relationship with Your Vet

Cats often urinate outside of the litter box due to medical reasons such as polyuria or pollakiuria. Polyuria refers to excessive urinating, a result of the body's inability to regulate urine formation, and it can indicate kidney disease or hormonal diseases such as diabetes or hyperthyroidism. Pollakiuria refers to frequent urinating and might indicate an irritation of or blockage in the bladder. In either case, cats may suffer from pain and serious life-threatening conditions.

Excessive vocalizing also can be due to health reasons. Dental pain could result in cats being unable to eat their regular food, which could lead to excessive vocalizations. In addition, senior cats might forget that they've eaten and meow more often for food. A solution is to provide smaller meals on a more frequent basis.

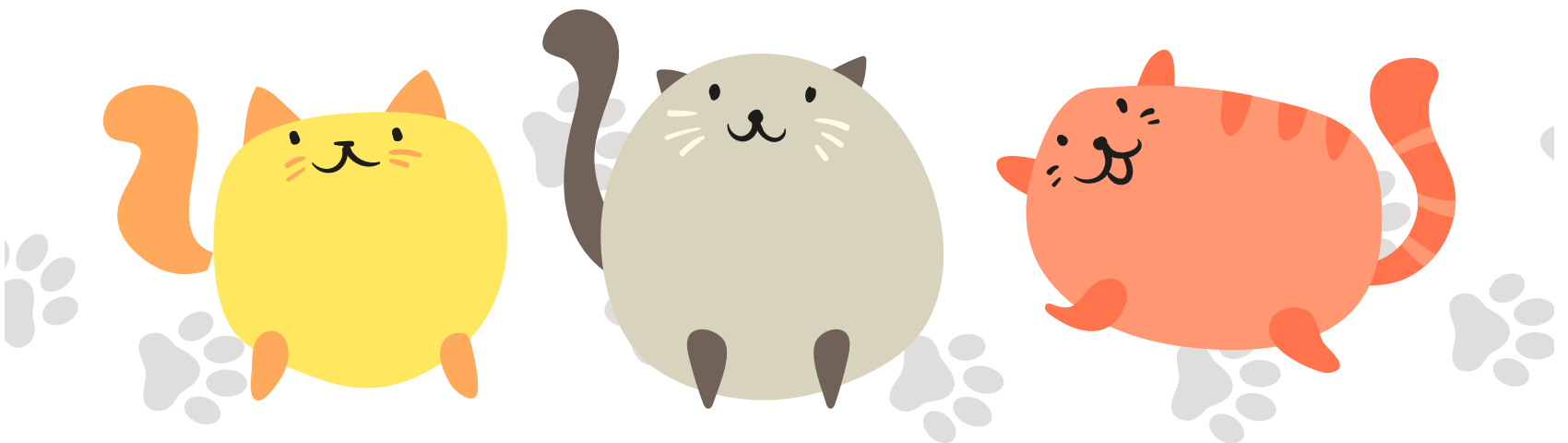
## Adjust the Environment

Due to physical changes that can impact the behavior of senior cats, resources should be easily accessible and located in the area of your home that your senior cats spend most of their time.

- Provide elevated feeders and water to make it easier for your cat to eat and drink.
- Provide steps or ramps to help your cat reach its favorite perches.
- Use night-lights to help your cat navigate and locate its resources.
- Provide various resting places for your cat.
- Provide multiple water bowls separately from food bowls to ensure your cat drinks enough and stay hydrated. Wide bowls should be used to prevent whisker stress. Also consider providing a pet water fountain.
- Install baby gates to block access to stairs if your cat is unsteady or disoriented and at risk of stumbling and falling down the stairs.
- Carpeted floors and area rugs provide more secure footing than hardwood, tile, or laminate flooring. Keep claws trimmed to prevent catching on carpet and bedding.

## Provide Grooming Support

Cats tend to do less self-grooming as they age and may need your help with their self-care.



## WANT TO IMPROVE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN YOU AND YOUR CAT?

Find answers to your cat's behavior from the comfort of your home through my services. I offer educational content, Q&A chats, webinars, classes, and consultations to solve your cat's behavioral needs. Contact me at [allisonhelpscats.wordpress.com](https://allisonhelpscats.wordpress.com)



# AGING CATS: Cognitive Needs

## Schedule Semi-Annual Checkups

Checkups are a good way to stay on top of any age-related health problems your cat might experience, such as cognitive dysfunction syndrome. This prevalent disease in cats is directly related to the brain aging, and the symptoms are similar to Alzheimer's and dementia.

- Disorientation: Cats might become lost or confused in a familiar environment, which can result in them becoming trapped in corners or behind furniture, staring at walls or into space, and struggling to find their resources.
- Interaction changes: Some cats may become clingier or more withdrawn; others might show disinterest or even irritability when approached or petted.
- Sleep-wake cycle: Cats that used to sleep throughout the night may now wake up in the middle of the night. In addition, cats may show abnormal nighttime behaviors, such as vocalizing, wandering, and pacing, along with decreased activity during the day.
- House soiling: Cats might begin to relieve themselves outside of the litter box.
- Activity changes: Cats with cognitive dysfunction might show decreased activity. They will explore less and become less responsive to people, things, and sounds. They might also groom and eat less.

## Provide Enrichment

All of the following can lead to increased mental stimulation and cognitive function:

- New and interactive toys
- Daily exercise
- Learning new things.

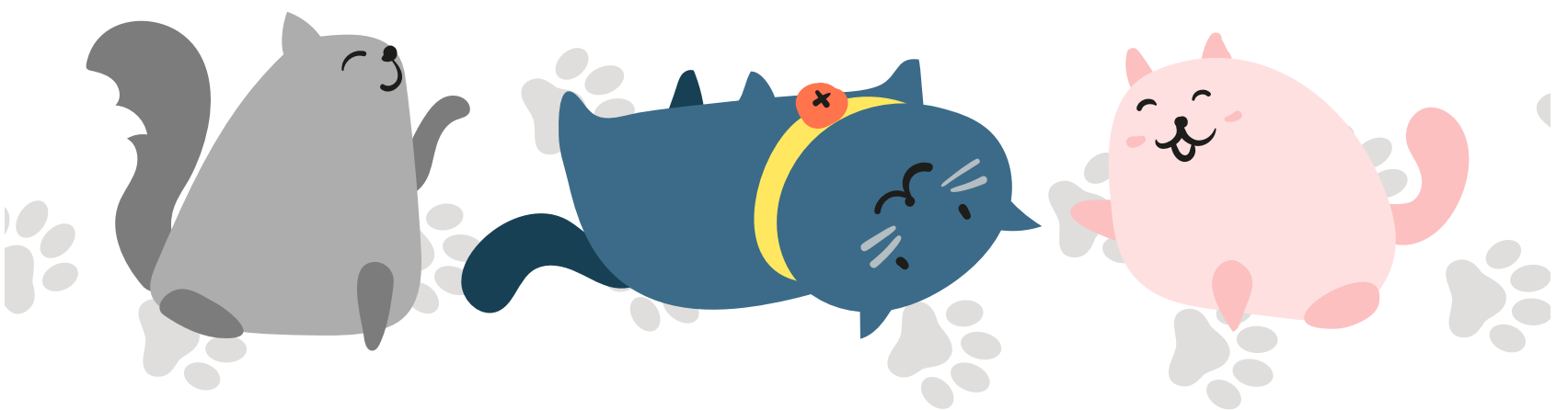
Older cats may take longer to adjust to enrich changes. Be sure to go at their pace.

## Stay Consistent and Predictable

Cats are sensitive to change. When schedule and environmental changes are inevitable, pet owners should ease into them at a pace with which their cats are comfortable.

- If having visitors or workers in the home upsets your cat, set it up in a "safe room" with food, water, litter boxes, a bed, and a radio to promote feelings of safety and calm.
- Avoid rearranging furniture around, if possible.
- If you are going out of town, be sure to have your catsitter feed your cats and have an interactive play session with your cats at the same time you usually do.

**Disclaimer:** All information in this checklist comes from my research, classes I have taken, and my experience as a cat trainer. I am not a veterinarian; please confirm all health care with your veterinarian.



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