



# FIVE PILLARS TO A HEALTHY CAT ENVIRONMENT

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| <h2>○ Safety</h2>    | <p>Provide a hiding place that is the right size for the cat, enclosed, and high up. Examples include a covered perch on a cat tree, a shelf cleared for a cat and cat blanket, or an open wardrobe door with articles of your clothing inside.</p> <p>Increase comfort level by providing bedding with their scent or yours. Ensure access to natural lighting and a window to perch.</p> <p><b>MULTIPLE CATS:</b></p> <p>Provide as many safe places as there are cats. Ways to increase space include: Add perches, shelves, and cat trees; divide rooms into several sections using vertical room dividers.</p> <p>Help your cat to see its carrier as a safe place too. Make it a normal feature of your home environment. Encourage your cat's use of it by placing bedding and food in it.</p> |
| <h2>○ Resources</h2> | <p>The key environmental resources for cats are food dishes, water bowls, litter boxes, scratching posts, and resting places.</p> <p>Ideally, there will be as many resources in the home as the number of cats. In other words, have at least one food dish, one water bowl, one litter box, and one scratching post per cat.</p> <p>Provide feeding stations for each cat or social group.</p> <p>Keep food and water dishes separate from each other. Place water bowls in different locations are the house.</p> <p>Every cat should have a choice about resources, and each resource should be one that the cat likes.</p>   |



## 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](http://allisonhelpscats.wordpress.com)

## Play and Predatory Behavior

Follow the prey sequence during play:

1. Cats stare at their prey and then move into the best position to stalk it.
2. Cats stalk their prey, wiggling their behind to signal an impending attack just before springing into action.
3. Cats pounce and grab their prey.
4. Cats roll onto their side and kick against their prey with their back legs while biting their prey.

Provide your cat with a variety of toys: self-play toys such as plush mice, battery-operated toys, puzzle toys/puzzle feeders, and interactive toys such as the wand toy.

Play two or three times per day at set times for 10-15 minutes sessions.

When a play session is about to end, let your cat catch the toy and switch it with food to replicate the hunt-then-eat pattern from the wild.

Allow your cat at times to play on its own.

Put out a different selection of toys each week to your cat engaged.

Use catnip spray to renew toys.

Make mealtimes interactive with puzzle feeders or with a game of hide-and-seek, where small portions of food are hidden around the home.

## People-Cat Interaction

Allow cats to initiate and end human contact. Examples include: Call them to you and wait to see if they come; get down on their level and put out a finger or hand to see if they approach.

When a cat ends an interaction by moving away, don't force further contact.

Learn what your cat likes or dislikes and then respect those boundaries.

Most cats like being scratched on their head, their chin, and on the back close to their tail. When cats head butt you, wrap their tails around your legs, slow blink, purr, or knead, they're showing that they're relaxed. The standard advice is to not rub a cat's belly.

Provide both individual and group attention without competition.

## Sense of Smell

Provide plenty of places for your cat to scratch.

When possible, don't remove objects that your cat has rubbed.

Don't wash all your cat's bedding at the same time.

Rub new cats and new objects with a fabric that has your resident cat's scent.

Avoid introducing competing smells such as scented cat litter.

If you need to place your cat in a cage, even if only for a short time, place your cat's bedding in the cage.

Use synthetic feline pheromones to reduce the impact of new scents.

Provide sensory enrichment when possible.

**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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