

Enrichment **Fun** for Shelter Cats!

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Enrichment

The purpose of enrichment is to reduce stress and improve well-being by providing physical and mental stimulation, encouraging species-typical behaviors, and allowing animals more control over their environment.

Successful enrichment programs prevent the development and display of abnormal behavior and provide for the psychological well-being of the animals.

Connecting with Cats

Social Enrichment with People



Quiet time with a caregiver

- Shy cats often appreciate one consistent caregiver.
- Some cats love petting and massage.
- Grooming is also pleasurable for some cats.
- Just being together is nice, too.
 - Consider “office time” for cats, especially those undergoing long term stays

For grooming, a tool that can be sanitized between cats is best.

Pictured is an “undercoat rake” - it makes a nice back scratcher!




Or, try a Kong “Zoom Groom”



Or just use your hands to massage and pet...

- Some kitties are very sensitive to petting and may become over-stimulated
- Caregivers must watch for signals of overstimulation (dilated pupils, tail twitching) and adjust their technique
- Cats have preferences for where they like to be petted – the cheeks and neck are good place to start for most cats

*Acupressure Point for Calming –
Massage dorsally between the ears*



Rub gently in a slow circular motion



This cat is very pleased to have some "office time".

**Play time with a caregiver:
Interaction via toys**

- Fun for cats and caregivers!
- This can be a great way to engage shy cats because the desire to stalk and pounce may bring them out of the shell.
- Play stimulates the predator within...
- Socially enriching and physically stimulating, too! Play and exercise...

The Desire to Stalk & Pounce is Great!



Cat dancer toys can be purchased at the dollar store – they are also easy to make








Cat Training is a Powerful Form of Enrichment!



- It is socially engaging as well as mentally and physically stimulating!
- Cats respond well to positive reinforcement or rewards.
- Food is generally the most motivating reward.
- The most “food motivated” cats are the easiest to train.
- Clicker training is very useful for cats – the trainer ‘clicks’ the desired behavior to let the cat know that was right and that a treat has been earned!

The first step in clicker training is to “charge the clicker”.

- This means that the trainer clicks and then feeds the cat and repeats this over and over so that the cat learns to associate a click with food...
- This is classical conditioning.

 **Clicker Training**
Click-treat, click-treat, click-treat, click-treat

Oh, I get it-- “click” means
kitty snacks are gonna
rain from the sky!

Next, the click is used to “mark” desired behaviors

- A “target stick” can be used as a prompt to elicit the desired behavior.
- Then, the trainer clicks to communicate to the cat that the desired behavior was performed and that a treat is coming.
- Eventually, the desired behaviors are learned through prompting and rewarding the cat.
- This is operant conditioning.

Cat Training



Trick training is not only a great form of mental stimulation, it may enhance adoptability – adopters may be attracted to a cat that “shakes hands”, “hive fives” or “waves”.

For timid cats, too

- If cats are food motivated, clicker training can be a powerful tool for building confidence.
- Some shelter cats are reluctant to come to the front of their enclosures – they may be overlooked by potential adopters as a result.
- Try teaching them to touch a target stick – then gradually bring the target stick closer and closer to the front of the enclosure.

Favorite tools and resources

- Commercially available “Clik Stik” is a retractable target stick and clicker all in one.
- Karen Pryor’s web site is an excellent source of information
– <http://www.clickertraining.com/>



Cats in action!

Physical stimulation



There's nothing like a good ball...



Things that dangle are nice, too.

We like to bat at these.



Made from construction paper and pipe cleaners – inexpensive, eye-catching, fun, quick and disposable!



Or, how about a dangly, darting “spider” to bat and chase?



Spider Toy: Materials



Spider Toy – Step 1



Spider Toy – Step 2



Spider Toy – Step 3



Spider Toy – Voila!





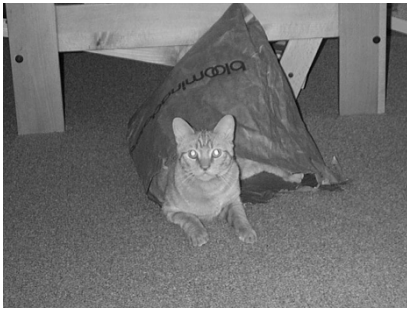
Places to go...



Meet you later at the fountain...



The only thing better than a ball is a bag.



Or, possibly a box...



Oh, to climb and explore...



I am on a secret mission.



I love towers...



So do we...



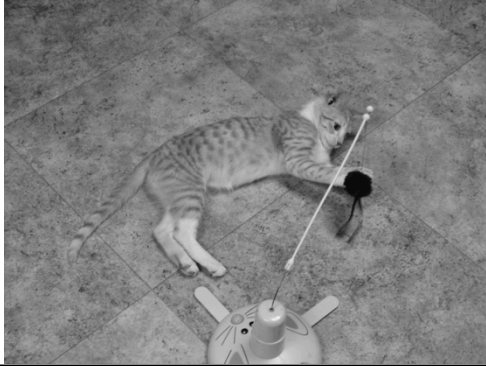
If you have time, we love to play...



But, we can also be amused by robotic toys...



I got it!





Commercially available Panic Mouse interactive toys - <http://www.panicmouseinc.com/>

Fling-a-ma-string!

[http://
www.moodypet.com/
flingamastring.html](http://www.moodypet.com/flingamastring.html)



Outdoor access when weather permits



*Oh, to
explore
outside
where there
is fresh air
and
sunshine!*





Purrfect Fence

www.purrfectfence.com

Sensory Enrichment

A good enrichment program engages all of the cat's senses in positive ways!

Sight

Hearing

Taste

Smell

Touch



The EYES have it!

Visual Enrichment




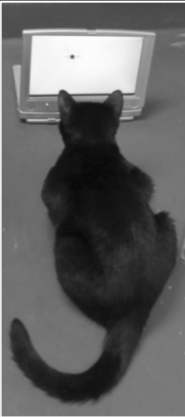


Window watching


There are many commercially available DVDs for cats! Images of squirrels, bugs and birds are popular for prime time viewing!

Playing them for only a short time each day will keep them interesting because cats will be less likely to habituate to them than if they are played for long periods.





"Oh, boy - my favorite DVD. Is that a bug on the screen? It looks so real..."

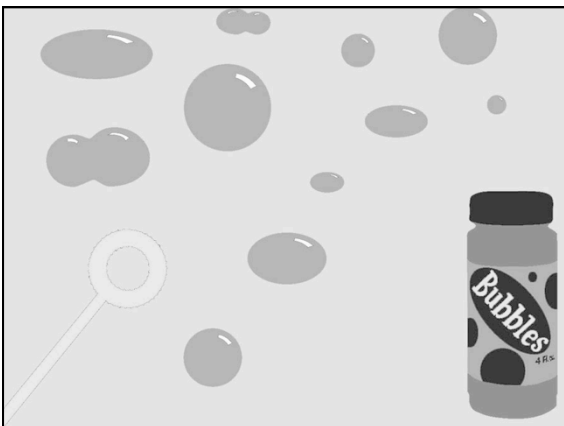


What if every day at 4 PM they turned out the lights, and turned this on?



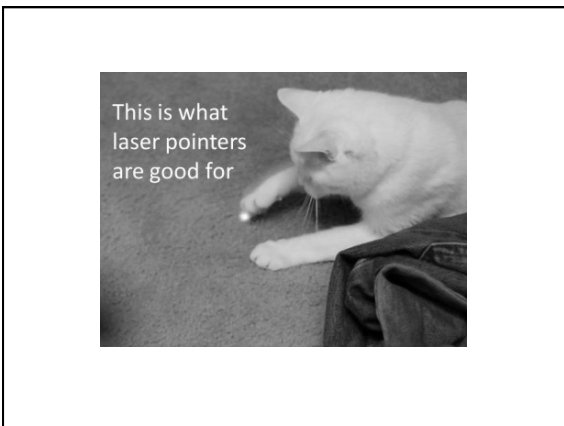












I love to watch things that move...



A bird feeder outside the window...



or a perpetual motion device outside my enclosure.

Ear, Ear!

Auditory enrichment



Little is known about the impact of auditory enrichment on cats...

- We do know that cats have an extraordinary sense of hearing, which extends into the range employed by bats!
- Cats are capable of detecting the high-frequency chattering of rats and mice.



What advice can we give?

- No loud music! No music with startling sounds!
- No radios on top of cages – this may cause unacceptable levels of noise and vibrations and must be avoided.
- Classical and easy listening music no louder than a conversational level may be appropriate.
- Establish and enforce strict rules to ensure that a low volume never be exceeded.

Products such as these are commercially available...

- Canine Lullabies (for cats, too?)
- Music for Cats and Friends



Check out these websites to HEAR more...

- www.musicmypet.com
- www.petsandmusic.com
- www.caninelullabies.com
- www.petsmusic.com
- <http://musicforcats.com/>



Yummy in the tummy!

Feeding Enrichment





*I want it,
I need it,
I gotta have
it!*

*Give me my
Vienna
sausage!*

Commercially available feeder toys such as Kongs® aren't just for dogs!



K
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Or, make your own!

Step 1: Collect empty paper rolls



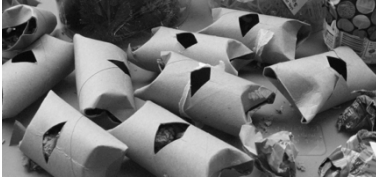
Make your own...

Step 2: Fill them with squeeze cheese and tuna (or anything cats find tasty)



Make your own...

Step 3: Cut, fold or leave open



Step 4: Serve to hungry cats



Or, fill Easter egg halves with canned cat food. You can even make a pinata!





The "pinata" is made from empty yogurt cups, duck tape and a pipe cleaner

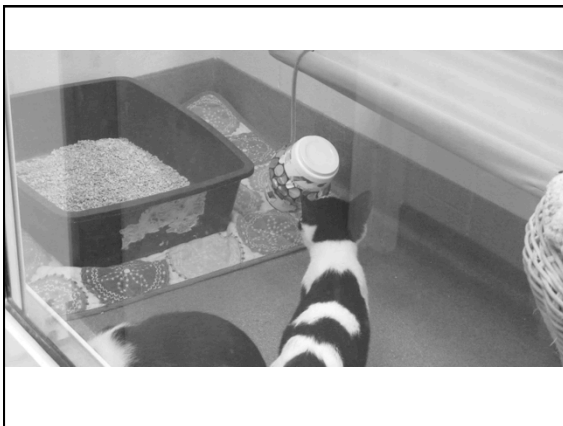


Cut a couple of holes in the plastic cups and stuff in some treats



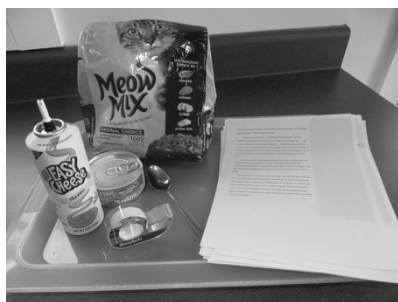
Hang it in the enclosure –
Ready for action!

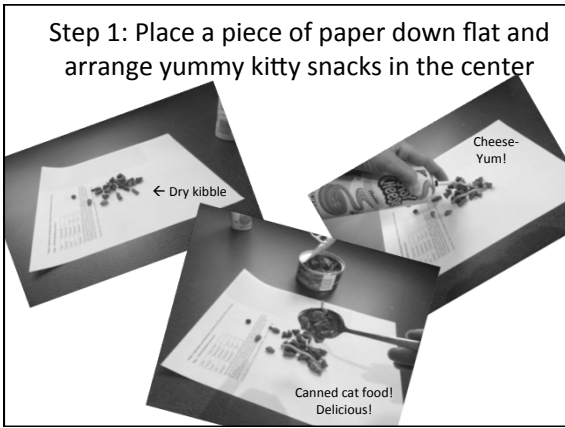


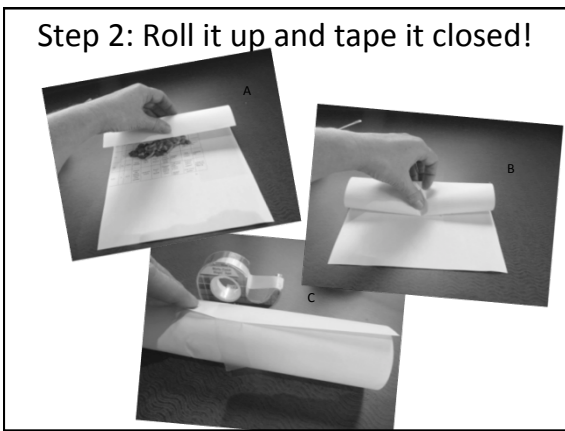


HOW TO MAKE A BURRITO...
WAIT! Make that a **PURR-ITO!**

All you'll need to make a delicious PURR-ito is some printer paper from the recycle bin, some tape, and some yummy cat snacks →








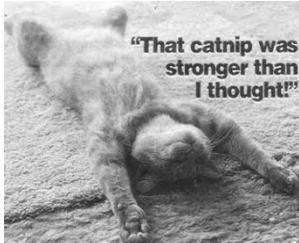









Cat nip, cat grass...
Ahhh!




Volunteers can grow cat grass and periodically bring it in for the cats!




How to make a fabulous cat toy...

- Step 1: Place a pinch of catnip in a strip of newspaper



- Step 2: Ball it up



Voila! Inexpensive, quick, disposable and aromatically enriching cat toys!



Busted!



Wait, do kittens respond to catnip?

- No – But, the paper ball itself is fun!
- Many adult cats do respond to catnip – and it can be very enriching for them!
- Catnip is safe / nontoxic – a great way to stimulate the senses for many cats!

How to make interesting cat toys – Lesson #2

- Go to the Dollar store... select some items... whatever catches your imagination!



Step 2: Marinate in catnip




Never let a cat put his face in the bag 😊









Lavender



- *May* have a calming effect
- Some shelters use “aromatherapy” as a form of olfactory enrichment for animals and staff. Liquid potpourri, which contains high concentrations of cationic detergents and essential oils, can cause oral and gastrointestinal ulceration as well as neurologic signs if ingested by cats. If aromatherapy is used, care must be taken to avoid direct contact by cats so that accidental ingestion can be prevented.

Many cat toys are made of fur and feathers



Definitely stimulating to kitties' olfactory sense!


Some cats are touchy, feely....
All cats LOVE to SCRATCH!

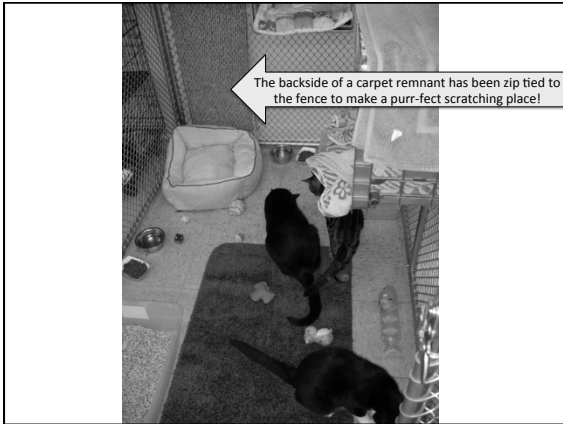
Tactile enrichment



Scratching

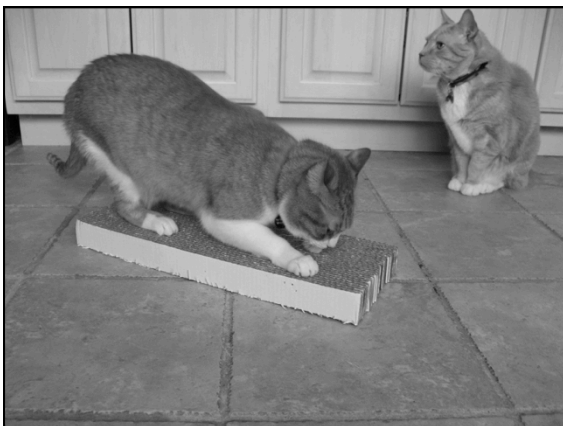
- An important behavioral need of cats
 - Scent marking
 - Conditions the claws
- Rakers vs pickers
 - Everyone has their own scratching style!
- Horizontal vs vertical
- Some useful materials:
 - The backs of carpet remnants
 - Cardboard boxes
 - Sisal rope





**Stretch
and
Scratch**

Click here to see it in action and learn more:
<http://www.stretchandscratch.com/>



Who doesn't find comfort in a nice bed?







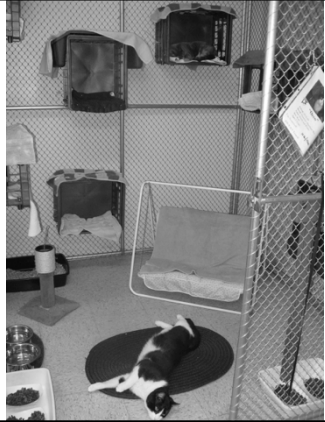
Hide-a-Boxes are a Must!

Hide, Perch and Go Box™



"Travel made easy"


"while your pet stays at home"



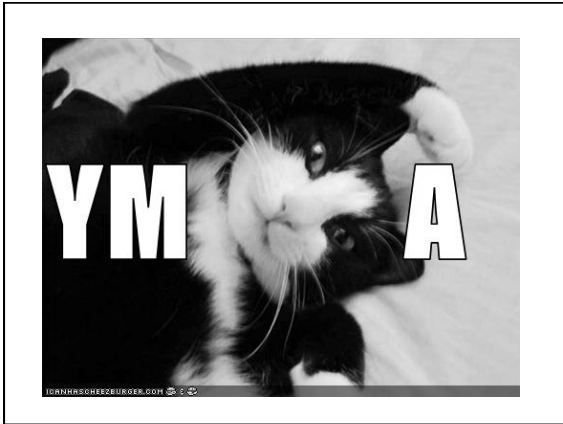
Rolling on a soft rug is nice, too.

Daily Routine

ALARM CLOCK CAT

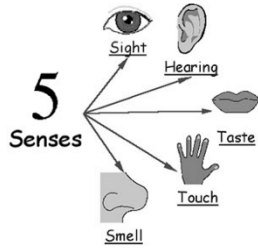


IS PRACTICIN FOR YOU



Remember....

- A good enrichment program stimulates all of the senses!



Daily Routine

- Predictable events
 - Cleaning at 7:30 AM
 - Glad that's over!
 - Tuna at 3 PM
 - Is it 3 o'clock yet?
- Light – Dark
 - Lights on by day
 - Off by night



Highly Recommended:
Shopping at the Dollar Store



Have **FUN!**