

PRESCRIPTION FOR YOUR CAT'S HAPPINESS (SOLO CAT)

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Pet cats retain many behaviors of their wild ancestor, *Felis lybica*, a solitary hunter of African and Arabian savannas and grasslands. As a small cat, they evolved as both predator and prey, and most feline behavior is designed to enable the cat to hunt safely (eating up to 10-20 small prey per day) and to protect itself (from other larger predators). As solitary hunters, they rely on watchfulness, familiar territory and routine to feel safe.

This need for a familiar and safe environment is critical for addressing your cat's behavioral *and* physical health problems; bladder disease, overgrooming, vomiting, and obesity can all result from stress. Below is the current plan to help fulfill your cat's needs in your home.

Safe Place

Key principles:

- A safe space is a private and secure area, often in a raised location. For cats with limited mobility, accommodations to reach higher locations should be made.
- Cats seek a sense of enclosure, isolation and/or seclusion.

1) Where can your cat go to avoid noises and/or unwanted human or animal interactions?

Room _____ Enclosed porch _____ Closet _____ Basement _____ Other _____

2) What will separate your cat from a stressor?

Closed door _____ Baby gate _____ White noise _____ High perch _____ Stairs _____ Other _____

3) While in its safe place, what can you provide for comfort and mental stimulation?

Lasting food toy _____ Window _____ Interesting scents _____ High perch/bed _____ Other _____



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Play & Predatory Behavior

Key principle: Cats should be able to engage in predatory play and feeding behaviors.

1) How will you provide outlets for important hunting behaviors (searching, stalking, chasing, catching)?

Stuffed animal(s) Electronic toy Laser toy Food puzzles Other _____

2) How often will you rotate your cat's toys? _____

3) When will you commit to playing with your cat for 3-5 minutes (cats are dawn and dusk hunters)?

When I wake up After breakfast/dinner Before bedtime When I brush my teeth

4) Can you provide your cat with safe outdoor time?

Resource Locations

Key principles:

- Your cat should be able to reach all key resources without having undesirable interactions with another pet or human, and without pain (e.g. arthritic pain from walking up/down stairs).
- Each resource should be separated by a wall or 5 feet of space, and there should be 2 of each.

[] **Litterboxes are large/easy access, located in a quiet location. They will be located:**
_____ and _____.

[] **Litter is soft to the touch (e.g. sand, clay, grass-based) and unscented.**

[] **Litterboxes will be scooped of soiled clumps at least once a day and litter completely changed**
Weekly Bi-monthly Monthly

[] **Resting places are available up high and semi-hidden, located:** _____
and _____.

[] **Nail scratching posts/boards will be placed** _____ and _____.

[] **Water will be placed** _____ and _____.

[] **Food will be provided** _____ and _____. As interactive puzzles?

Appreciating the Sensory World of Cats

Key principles:

- Cats rely heavily on their sense of smell.
- Cats feel threatened by strong smells and comforted by scents they deposit in their own environment.

1) What can you remove from your cat's space that is harsh or strong smelling?

Essential oils Scented litter Air freshener Strong cleaner Potpourri

2) What can you add to your cats' spaces that increases comforting smells?

Familiar bedding Pheromone products Rub new items w/ cat's scent











Appropriate Social Interactions

Key principles:

- Many cats prefer a high frequency, low intensity level of social contact with humans.
- Cats should be able to initiate, moderate and end their interactions with humans (and other pets).
- Cats need escape routes from young children.

How can your cat feel like s/he has the choice to interact with people and other pets?

- [] All people understand my cat should consent to any touch by showing behaviors like approaching with tail raised, relaxed/almond-shaped eyes and slow blinking. My cat should not be picked up without these behaviors.
- [] I will try to provide multiple entrances/exits from resting spots, litter boxes & other key resources.

Body Shape & Posture	Tail As Mood Barometer	Ears & Eyes
 <p>ARCHED BACK AGGRESSION STANDING SIDWAYS</p> <p>When a cat is fearful or angry, they'll often make themselves as big as possible in various ways.</p>	 <p>QUIVERING EXCITEMENT HAPPY/COMFORTABLE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High • Friendly • Vibrating 	 <p>FORWARD CALM + CONFIDENT</p>
 <p>NORMAL POSTURE CONFIDENCE BODY FACING YOU</p> <p>If a cat is pointing their head or body to you, they may be receptive to your advances.</p>	 <p>TUCKED FEARFUL/UNEASY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low • Anxious • Small Target 	 <p>FLATTENED DOWN ANGRY OR FEARFUL</p>
 <p>ANXIETY OR FEAR BALL SHAPED TRYING TO APPEAR SMALL</p> <p>The crouched down body position enables the cat to spring off, should they feel the need.</p>	 <p>FICKING AGITATION HIGH ALERT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upset • Back Off • Lack of Receptivity 	 <p>When a cat's eyes are large and dilated, that mean's it's stimulated. Dilated pupils can indicate fear, excitement or anger.</p>
		 <p>When a cat's pupils are narrow and constricted that could indicate aggression. Consider the context to decide.</p>

Useful Links & Resources

- Food Puzzles for Cats (never feed from a bowl again): <http://foodpuzzlesforcats.com>
- Smart Cat Litter from Pioneer (grass-based unscented litter): <https://pioneerpet.com/smart-cat-litter>
- Indoor Pet Initiative from Ohio State University: <https://indoorpet.osu.edu/cats>
- Feline Environmental Needs Guidelines (from American Association of Feline Practitioners): <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1098612X13477537>
- Interactive Cat Play (how to move those toys to stimulate your cat): <http://whatyourcatwants.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Interactive-Cat-Play-2-22-2021.pdf>
- Videos from Fundamentally Feline: <https://www.fundamentallyfeline.com/videos>