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Toys, Therapy and Cat Behavior: How You Can Interact With Your Cat

Cat Diets – How to Help Your Kitty Retain That Pampered, Lithe Figure

You love your cat and your cat loves you. There is nothing more rewarding than returning home after a long day at work or school and be greeted with a happy meow from your furry little companion, as she rubs against her legs and loudly announces to the world how happy she is that you have finally returned. After giving her a lot of attention and a good back rub, you fix yourself some dinner; but one look at the big eyes convinces you to make up an extra little plate for your furry friend.

Sure, she has a bowl of cat food sitting next to her, and it pretty much holds as much food as it did when you last filled it this morning before you left for work or school, but what possible damage could a little bit of “human food” do to your meowing friend? As a matter of fact, it could do quite a lot of damage! Here are four tips on how to help your kitty retain that pampered, lithe figure.

First and foremost, resist the urge to give in to those begging eyes and loud meows. Table scraps may smell heavenly to your little feline companion, and it may make you feel like a wonderful bonding time to be eating dinner with your cat, but keep in mind that some foods, such as chocolate and onions, are actually toxic to your cat and your giving in to her does her no favors.

Additionally, considering how much fat is in our foods, it is only a logical conclusion that your table scraps will introduce too much fat into her system to be properly digested. The result of this will be an overweight, unhealthy cat. Quite possibly the worst consequence of your giving your furry companion some of your food for dinner is the fact that it will sate her appetite, and she will turn up her little nose at her own food. Now cats have special dietary requirements that are germane to the species, and a lack of intake of these nutrients will result in sickness and might even cause death.

This is not to say that a little plate for Thanksgiving, Christmas or your kitty’s birthday or adoption day will spell death and destruction for her. As a matter of fact, a little bit of turkey will be good for her! Just make sure that this is the exception rather than the rule, and resist the temptation to feed her from your table and instead fix her a special bowl before the meal.

Secondly, inappropriate feeding may lead to a number of health risks in your cat. Fatty liver disease, obesity, and painful urinary tract disorders are at the top of the list of problems encountered when cats are not properly fed. Please keep in mind that these illnesses are not only the result of being fed table scraps, but –depending on the cat- may also be the result of inferior quality commercial cat food. Probably the biggest myth that many cat lovers fall victim to is the tale that all cat food is created equal. This is simply not true, and you will do well to discuss cat food options in general and those for your little furry companion specifically with your veterinarian.

Third, and probably just as importantly, get into a good working relationship with a veterinarian. Cat food choices have become so complex, with each manufacturer touting its own brand over all others, that the average cat owner will become quite confused by the varied claims.

Additionally, keeping in mind that a lot of cat foods have been manufactured keeping our human sensitivities in mind, such as the idea of shape, size, color, and even smell, it is no wonder that it is hard to discern which food is actually meeting your kitty's nutritional needs and which is simply making her bloated and maybe even sick. A veterinarian will be able to help you maneuver through the maze of a cat's nutritional needs, understand the difference between taurine and other nutrients listed on the label, and she or he will also help you to finally put to rest the nagging question: dried or canned?

Five Homemade Toys to Keep Your Kitty Happy

Sometimes cats can be very easily amused. Don't be surprised or offended if your cat has more fun with the packaging of the toy you just spent a fortune on. Here are some ideas for FREE toys that your cat should enjoy

1: Paper Balls

Again, simple things can very easily amuse cats. Take for example: paper balls. Grab a sheet of scrap paper and crumble it into a ball. "Abra Cadabra" you just made your first cat toy. Throw this to your cat and watch him chase it for hours. A little piece of paper will fascinate her. She will love the way it just rolls around and she just can't seem to catch it. You think I am kidding, don't you? Go ahead. Try it. What harm can it do? If she does not like it, you spent ABSOLUTLY NOTHING! So go ahead and try it.

Cats love these things, and unlike balls with smooth surfaces, these things can roll in any unpredictable direction, and on floors they tend to make a scratching noise that cats go bonkers over.

2: Old Socks

Yes, you read correct: Old Socks. Tie them in a knot the size of a mouse and you have the perfect cat toy. It is best if the sock is from you or someone the cat really likes. They will smell you on it, and therefore love it even more. Stuff some catnip in with it to spice things up. Your cat will chase this around for hours. You might even consider tying a string to the end and dragging it along the floor. This will make your free toy an interactive free toy!

3: Cylinders

There are two basic ways to go about creating a cylinder toy for your cat. You can make a noisy one or a quiet one. We all know from experience, most pets love things that make noise. Cats, dogs, and husbands, as well as other varieties of pets love to make noise.

A film canister is one of the easiest things to make a toy out of. To make it noisy, just fill it with some rice or a few small pebbles. If you do this make sure you securely close the lid. Using some type of non-toxic glue is best. You don't want your cat eating raw rice. It can cause lots of digestive problems that, unlike your film canister, are not free.

You can also use old paper towel rolls; toilet tissue rolls, or just about anything shaped like a cylinder. Your cats will roll it around for hours. If it is something large, like a carpet roll, your cat may also climb in it and have a blast.

4: Boxes

Cats love boxes. They love to explore them and claim them as their new home. If you bring home a new TV, make sure you check the box for any of your feline friends, because she will almost certainly be in there. It seems that there is an invisible message written on boxes that only cats can see that says "VACANCY- FREE ROOM!" Cats seem to be attracted to boxes. They will get in, jump out, get back in, jump back out, and usually end up falling asleep in their new home. To them, you just brought home a palace. You are such a good servant. She will reward you later, by allowing you to pet her!

5: Catnip

Place a little catnip in anything you can stuff it in that your cat plays with. Socks, stockings, cylinders, make sachets and place them in boxes, corners, and kitty condos. Your cat will get a sniff of this and go nuts. She will be happy for hours. Please remember that catnip does not work on all cats. Usually they do not affect kittens and older cats, and some are just genetically immune to the effects of this mint. If nothing else, you can always make a tea out of it and drink it yourself. Catnip tea is a great herbal tea for people. But if your cat does like catnip, don't let her catch you stealing her catnip, or else it will be, "Off with your head!!"

Great Interactive Toys to Pamper Your Kitty Out of Boredom

Kittens are not much different than small children-or even some teens and adults- when it comes to being bored. Boredom often causes a small cat to get into mischief, and it will scratch furniture, chase and kill birds, or even try to eat the household fish from its tank.

So a cat can have some fun, and stay out of trouble too, it is good for it to have interactive toys to play with, either as a game with its owner, or individually.

Some objects that can be used for kitten games are a wooden stick or plastic pole with a catnip bag, plastic mouse, or foil ball attached to it by a string, a ping pong ball, or a foil hockey puck. The wooden stick with the object attached by a string would be used to dangle the object on the end in front of the cat, which paws at it as if the object is a predator.

The foil hockey puck is to be used on a kitchen or other floor that will allow it to slide. The pet owner gives the puck a slight push, and watches the cat chase after it as it glides across the floor. The ping-pong ball can be used either to bounce down a staircase or in a bathtub, and the kitten will chase and paw after it.

Often the above described simple interactive toys can be made right at home. In addition, other toys can be purchased online or in person that serve to interact with a feline pet. Some of them are round balls with a bell inside that makes noise, squeaky plastic toys, or toys filled with catnip. All these can be thrown or rolled and the kitten will chase after it. Usually a human has to initiate the interaction, but sometimes the kitten will play with the toy on his or her own as well.

Other new toys that have come out within the past few years are the Cat Cuddle Coil, Cat-A-Trail Play Tunnel, Kitty's Little Garden, and Panic Mouse Interactive cat. Each of these has a special function to keep a cat busy for quite awhile. These are described further below.

The Cat Cuddle Coil, for instance, is a rainbow shaped coil that looks like a little tunnel in which the cat can crawl into and out of. This is also an ideal place for a cat to crawl into to sleep or rest. This object lies flat for storage, and should be used under supervision by pet owner.

Another object for cat crawling fun would be the Cat-A-Trail Play Tunnel. These tunnels can be set up two or more in a row for extra fun, and a catnip toy is included in each one. These have a drawstring for easy storage, and come in colors such as teal, blue, and red, and are made out of nylon material.

One more example of a new cat toy to purchase would be Kitty's Little Garden. This is a little block garden that can sit on the floor in any room of the house. It often contains seed compartments of oats, wheat, rye and barley. Cats, especially wild ones, often eat these in between snacking on mice and other animals. Also, this can help detract a cat from heading for the garden. Furthermore, cats are thought to be attracted to the moisture content, as well as the high fiber associated with the blades of grass.

Cats would especially love this feline toy that provides hours of fun. It is called the Panic Mouse Interactive cat toy. Each package usually would include a Panic Mouse, plastic wand, and replacement mouse. This toy is battery operated, and has a motor that signals random mouse-like movements, which the cat reacts. Furthermore, the artificial fur pouch attached to this battery operated toy even looks and feels like a real toy, and operates at several speeds, some slow enough for kittens.

The Panic Mouse Interactive Toy is perfect for people gone for long hours on a job, or even for people on an overnight vacation. The cat would hardly ever get bored with this battery-operated object to keep it busy for hours.

Another version of the Panic Mouse Toy is the model that spins 360 degrees. This one is even more challenging, and brings even more fun into the cat's life. The timer on this toy can be set for up to two hours, and includes fun accessories to make this toy even more fun to use for the kitten and owner. Again, it has an adjustable speed to accommodate for both kittens and adult sized cats, which provides challenge for the feline pet at any age.

Your kitten is sure to be cured from boredom if he or she gets involved in playing with one of the above interactive toys, either as an individual activity or as a game with the cat's owner. If your kitten is having good clean fun with you, it will decrease the tendency for him or her into trouble, and instead enjoy innocent pastimes.

Feel free to visit this site and others as often as you need to in order to continue to challenge your growing kitten. If you do, you will be doing your entire household a favor.

Six Great Games to Play With Your Cat

Ever wonder how you could strengthen the bond between you and your cat? There are at least six games you can play with your cat.

Note: The foil ball or hockey puck shape objects used for the first two cat games described should be thrown away or put away after use. It is fine for game use, but not meant to be for unattended cat play.

Two games to play with your cat involve the use of aluminum foil, one of which is called Paw Hockey. In order to play this, first shape a portion of tin foil into a round hockey puck shape. Then, show the cat the aluminum foil puck, and then place it on an uncarpeted finish hardwood, linoleum or tile floor. After you place the puck on the floor, then push it enough for it to glide across the room. Soon, your cat will want to copy you, by pawing the puck, causing the puck to slide across the floor.

Another game using aluminum foil would be the game called Chase the thing on the String. This game involves tying a ball of aluminum foil onto a long stick or poll (the use of twine would be best), and then giggling it around in front of the cat while the cat paws at it. Be sure to let your cat grab the object with his or her paws one in awhile, so the cat can feel like a successful predator.

The Chase the Thing on the String game can also be played with objects, rubber mice, and other objects that can be attached easily to a poll with a string.

Two other games you can play with your cat involve the use of a ping-pong ball. The first ping-pong ball game is called the Staircase Dash. First place your cat at the top of the stairs (or pay attention for an opportunity when your cat is already waiting at the top of the stairs). Then, from the base of the stairs, fling a ping-pong ball against the side wall of the staircase, about two steps below where the cat is sitting. This thrown ball will then bounce down the steps, and the cat will vigorously chase after the ball as it bounces its way down the steps.

A second game using a ping-pong ball would be for the game Bathtub Scurry. First, clear any shampoo and soap bottles from around the outside of the tub, and clear out any bathtub toys. Then, put your cat in the clean, dry bathtub, and show the cat the ping-pong ball. After that, you should bounce the ball off the side of the tub to get it moving. Your cat will begin chasing

after the ball as it bounces around. If the ball begins to slow down, give it another roll to get it going again. Your cat will love this game and be amused for quite some time.

Another cat game to play would be shadows on the wall. This is played by the use of a flashlight, and small objects. First, you should start by shining light onto a wall in a dark room. Then you can take small cat toys or other small objects, and the cat will chase after the shadows, as if he or she is chasing after a predator. Another variation of this would be to make birds, mice, or other animal shapes with your hands that would be represented by shadows on the wall. The cat would recognize the shape of these shadows and chase after those as well.

Another fun cat game for you and your cat to play together is the Chase the Bubbles game. You can purchase already made bubble mix or make some of your own. Then, you can take a bubble wand, and blow bubbles in all different directions around the room, or even outside. Watch as your cat jumps up, or runs to try to catch the floating bubbles. This will keep you and your cat busy for quite awhile.

Another technique to use when playing this game; would be to alternate between blowing bubbles around the room and waving the wand around the room.

If you need a recipe to use to make your own bubbles to use for the Chase the Bubbles game would be the following: Mix 1/2 cup of dishwashing liquid, 1 cup of water, 2 tablespoons glycerin, and 1/2 teaspoons sugar together. This is the same recipe that is often used for creating bubbles to use for children.

These six games will keep you and your cat busy for hours, and help the cat to get the exercise he or she really needs.

Catty Characteristics – How to Pamper Your Cat When She’s in a “Catty” Mood

You come home and you know that something is amiss. Your apartment looks like a whirlwind tore through it: papers are strewn all over the ground, pillows have been overturned, your potted plant is now sagging sadly on the floor, and long scratch marks grace your previously pristine doors. Your cat is eyeing you from her perch high on top of the refrigerator and you see her tail twitching back and forth vigorously.

While you are hanging up your clothes you notice a rather pungent smell and realize that your little kitty has been using your pile of unfolded laundry as her litter box. You are exasperated. You love your cat. With a heavy sigh you wonder if there is anything you can do to soothe that ferocious little feline that has just made clear to you that an unhappy feline can indeed be a rather destructive feline.

As any cat lover can tell you, taking the cat and rubbing her nose in the soiled pile of laundry will not only be counterproductive, but quite possibly be met with hissing, spitting, scratching and an evil eye that only a cat can deliver with conviction. Similarly, telling your cat how

naughty she has been will most likely only earn you the equivalent of a cat sneer. Fortunately cats are not usually vindictive, and destruction and sudden undesirable changes in feline behavior are most often the result of changes the cat deems to be undesirable.

Rather than deriding the cat for her failure to comply with your rules and regulations, consider if there have been any changes in your cat's environment that may have upset her. For example, did you recently change her food, litter or bedding? Have you been spending a lot of time at work and neglected her usual playtime? Have you been on vacation? Have you added a new member to the family, or worse – a new cat?

The latter alone is enough to cause a lot of friction and unhappiness. At this point your best bet is to find out what has set off your usually docile little feline and then undo the problem. If it is something as simple as a new kind of food or litter, you will be able to simply remedy this situation with a quick trip to the local mega mart to once again purchase the brand your cat has come to know and love. If it is something as big as a new family member, however, you will not be able to fix the situation that easily, and some pampering of your feline companion is in order.

If you find your unhappy feline perched on top of the refrigerator, it is probably best to greet her and let her know very briefly that her behavior is unacceptable. Then it is best to simply ignore her. Once she decides that your attention is better than her pouting on top of the fridge, accept her overtures as she leaves her high hiding place and cautiously comes to interact with you. You may consider stroking her to soothe her and speaking softly to her to reassure her.

If you have a small treat you could give her, such as a bit of tuna fish or shrimp, you may wish to present it to her at this time. Obviously, you don't want to give table scraps to your cat, but unless she has specific dietary needs, a little special treat should not harm her. Once a truce has been established, you may wish to test the waters with a cat toy or two. Perhaps she will be in the mood to chase a little ball or maybe play with the string toy.

Whatever you decide to do, if your cat is unhappy, it is important that you do take the time to see to her needs and reaffirm the bond that has been created between you and your feline companion. Sometimes it may be hard to do so, especially if you come home to an apartment that looks like a before screen shot for various home decorating and remodeling shows, but letting out frustration out on your cat will neither change her behavior nor improve the mood in your household.

"Cat-lypso" Music – Does Music Mellow Your Cat?

Much has been written about the power of music to sooth the soul, aid relaxation, and improves developmental brain functions. But did you know that music might also help soothe your frazzled kitty? Musicians and music publishers have even composed and released compilations of mood music, specifically designed to help mellow your favorite feline friend.

If you're skeptical as to what music can do to help mellow your cat, consider this: a cat's sense of hearing is remarkably sharper than human's. Research shows that cats have a much more expansive hearing range than humans, ranging between 45 to 64,000 Hz. Compare that with the average hearing range of a human, which are 23 to 64,000 Hz. Cats are particularly adept at sensing sounds at the low and high end of the spectrum.

This may explain why cats are prone to their infamous "caterwauling" at the sound of discordant music or sounds.

Cat's ears are physiologically designed to capture a variety of sounds, even those that occur at a far distance. The design of their ear canals allows cats to receive and magnify sounds, even at a far away distance. Cats have been shown to be able to detect relatively quiet sounds at distances of up to 30 feet away.

Since cats have shown to have a very good sense of hearing, it makes sense that the right music can help mellow your cat. For instance, consider the sweet, slow strain of a violin featured in a classical composition. The sound is high enough to capture your cat's attention, and may prove to have a sedative effect on him or her.

But how do you know what kind of music to play for your cat? Some cats are incredibly expressive. Cat owners have told stories about pets who scurry out of the room at the sound of loud music or a blaring TV set. The best way to see what your cat prefers is to experiment. Try playing a soothing classical piece and see what happens. If you note no perceptible reaction, try experimenting with more upbeat jazz tempo pieces. Some animal behavior researchers claim that loud rock or heavy metal music can disrupt your pet's relaxation patterns.

If you would like to promote your cat's relaxation, and are considering making an investment in your cat's sonic experience, you may want to consider purchasing one of several musical compilations designed specifically for your pet's listening appreciation. Professor Hermann Bubna-Littitz is an animal behaviorist at the Veterinary University of Vienna. He has studied the effects of music on cats and has asserted that fussy or nervous cats can benefit from a little mood music. He even put together a compilation of songs designed to mellow out your cat, titled Music for Cats and Friends.

According to Professor Bubna-Littitz, his research shows that cats specifically sought out the music speakers while the soothing songs were being played. The cats became notably relaxed, and aggressive tendencies became subdued. Included in Professor Bubna-Littitz's CD is electronically synthesized versions of popular tunes such as 'Endless Time,' 'Moonlight Walk,' 'Coming Home,' and appropriately enough, 'Memories,' from the popular Andrew Lloyd Weber musical, Cats.

Another popular song compilation aimed to keep your feline friend content and relaxed is Relaxation Music for Dogs and Cats. Relaxation Music for Dogs and Cats contains an hour of music designed to keep your dog relaxed at home, in the car, or when going to the vet. The music is described as an environmental soundscape, created through the use of synthesized orchestrations. The music on this compilation was scored specifically for the hearing ranges of dogs and cats.

If you or your cat grows tired of the synthesized classical tunes, you may want to experiment with another very popular song compilation. Music for Cats...and People Too! It is just what it sounds like. The songs were compiled to soothe both you and your kitty. This compilation includes a variety of musical styles, including ambient, classical, jazz, and includes natural sounds from the environment, as well. A variety of musical instruments were used, including saxophone, guitar, and keyboards. All 18 selections on Music for Cats...and People Too are original compositions that were written specifically for the hearing ranges of most cats.

Several Ways Cats Pamper Their Humans

Do you ever get the feeling that your pet is taking care of you, rather than vice versa? You may not be too far off. Recent research has demonstrated conclusively that owning a loving pet provide innumerable benefits, enriching both your physical and your emotional life.

Here are five ways that cats pamper their humans in ways you may not have realized before.

1. Your cat may just help you get a better night's sleep. Researchers are just beginning to measure the sleep patterns of individuals who sleep with their pets, and gauge the effect pets have on their owners. So far, it appears that sleeping with your pet can provide significant benefits. Human beings that sleep along side their animals are certainly not beginning a new phenomenon. It is believed that in prehistoric times, humans and animals slept close together to create and sustain warmth. Even now, with our space heaters and air conditioning units, nothing quite beats the warmth and comfort of having a loving pet at your bedside.

The emotional and psychological benefits of sleeping with a pet can be even more substantial. Just knowing that your pet is going to join you at night can help provide with a relaxing environment that is conducive to getting a good night's rest. Winding down after a long day's labor can be a treat for both you and your cat. Moreover, the time you spend together each night serves to enhance your relationship and helps to nourish a sustaining emotional bond.

2. Your cat may also be pampering you with their busy paws. Cat lovers are very familiar with the kneading action that many cats make with their paws when they are in a relaxed state. As many cat lovers' can testify, this kneading paw action can give quite a massage! Stroking, petting, or brushing your cat's fur can also be a relaxing and enriching experience for you and your cat.

3. The allure of the sweet purr. What cat lover hasn't enjoyed the soft trill of a cat's purr? The sound and vibration of a cat's purr is beginning to be scientifically studied, and it is believed that the sound can lower your heart rate, blood pressure, and aid your ability to fall asleep. The cat purr phenomenon has begun to grow in popularity, with researchers taking interest and investigating the so-called curative and sedative effects of a cat's purr. A new compact disc featuring the purring of cats is even being marketed to individuals who have trouble falling asleep.

4. The joy of companionship. To those who've never experienced the companionship of a cat, it can be difficult to describe the allure of having a feline companion at your side. Cats provide a type of companionship that is marked by loyalty and affection. Unlike dogs, cats are notoriously more independent than dogs. They are capable of grooming themselves and going to the bathroom with little need for help from their owners. This combination of loyalty and independence creates a unique relationship between cat and owner that parallels many human relationships.

5. Cats pamper their owners by showing them a better way to live. It has been argued in the past that animals often experience life more richly than humans. Let your cat pamper you by observing and learning from her life philosophy. Your cat's philosophy may include:

Take frequent naps. They don't call it a 'cat nap' for nothing! Cats famously fall asleep quickly, then awaken refreshed and ready to play at a moment's notice. Taking a moment in your day to rest can ease even the most difficult day. So do as your cat does, and take a nap!

Bask in your solitude. Even the most outgoing person needs a few minutes each day to recharge and refresh. Cats wisely know that solitude feeds the soul and distresses your mind and body. So take a cue from your cat and take some time out for yourself.

Stretch the tension out of your tired body. What do cats do best, besides sleeping and eating? Stretching! When a cat rises from a long nap, note the moments of luxurious stretching. Not rushed or hurried, but simply a long, slow stretch to slowly reawaken the body. Human beings, too, would benefit from frequent stretching.

Subtle Ways Your Cat Trains You

Cats are subtle in the ways they train their human owners. Just as we train them to use a scratching post or accept a new baby, there are many ways they train us.

Cats want us to ensure that they have a safe, fun home. Keep plenty of cat toys and treats on hand.

Of major importance to a cat is the maintenance of their litter box. You should have one litter box for each cat and it should be placed in a safe, quiet location. Keep the box away from the food and water bowls and also away from any doors. Most litter boxes are too small. Cats need a simple litter box of adequate size. You will learn what type of litter your cat prefers and should stick with that brand. Keep the litter box clean. Mats placed under the box keep the litter in or near the receptacle and keep it from being tracked through your home. Keep matters predictable. Cats love routine and may become skittish with a change in venue.

Cats will beg for someone to play with. Make time for your pet. Scatter some catnip across the floor and marinate your cat's favorite toy in catnip. Watch your cat get frisky! Have a kitty condo or palace on hand for times when you are away from home. Your cat will learn to entertain himself.

Cats need to be groomed. Groom your cat daily with a brush, comb, or glove to remove excess hair and prevent hairball buildup. Feel for bumps, cuts, tumors, sores, bumps, or a flea infestation. This manner of massage will aid your cat's circulation and also release oils for your kitty's coat. Cats that are groomed benefit emotionally, physically, and mentally, as do their owners.

Cats don't necessarily want their claws trimmed but it is a necessary evil. Trim your cat's claws every two to six weeks with cat clippers and give treats when your mission is accomplished.

Learn how to brush your cat's teeth for their sake, their feline friend's sake, and yours. All parties will appreciate fresh cat breath. Purchase a poultry flavored toothpaste from your pet store and brush one or two teeth and the gumline to start. Once your cat becomes accustomed to the process you can progress to brushing more teeth. Brush your cat's teeth once or twice a week to prevent tartar buildup and tooth decay.

Your cat will appreciate you learning feline body language. Cattails are great indicators of a kitty's mood and intent. Broad swishing of a cattail indicates annoyance. If your cat's tail is swishing back and forth, he is agitated. A cat that is afraid will puff up or have his tail bristle, or lower it and tuck it between his legs. A raised tail signals a friendly cat. Cats with bent forelegs are ready to defend and fight if the need arises.

If your cat's fur is fluffed up, you are the owner of a confident, aggressive cat. Ears back and a steady posture mean that your cat is considering his next move. However, ears back with a body low to the ground means that your cat is ashamed and remorseful. Pricked ears indicate a very aware cat. When your cat's head is raised he is displaying an air of confidence. A lowered head indicates a submissive cat who feels inferior. A bored cat leaves his head tucked in. Knowing cat language can help you communicate with each other and better your relationship.

Monitor your cat's health. Know what to look for when assessing your cat's eyes, mouth, ears, nose, coat and body, and anus. Consult your veterinarian upon any symptoms of illness. Schedule regular visits with your veterinarian and have your cat's eyes, ears, and teeth examined as well as blood taken for diabetes testing.

Prepare for emergencies. Keep a two-week supply of cat food and water on hand at all times in waterproof containers. Also make sure to have a fresh supply of cat litter, scoop, and pan in your disaster relief kit. Your cat should have a collar and leash with her name and phone number clearly marked. If your kitty takes any medication, you should have a back-up supply of pet meds as well as a cat carrier for emergency evacuations.

Cat Therapy – Reasons Why Cats Make Good Therapy Animals

Although they are sometimes outshined by their canine counterparts, cats often make some of the best therapy animals. With their warm soft fur, meditative yogic poses, and relaxing purr, the health benefits of using cats as therapy animals is quite impressive. Here are six reasons why more and more people, nursing home facilities, and hospitals are recruiting cats as therapy

animals.

1. Cats make your heart happy. Research has shown repeatedly the effects of cats on easing blood pressure. Researchers have time and again conducted studies in which participants are connected to blood pressure and heart monitors as they pet cats, and the results have been impressive. Petting a cat can reduce your blood pressure, slow your heart rate, and create feelings of well-being and comfort. Individuals with high blood pressure can benefit greatly from spending time with a loving cat. Some studies indicate that simply petting a cat for a sustained period of time can have a similar effect as conventional medication prescribed to patients with high blood pressure.

2. Cats can help relieve loneliness. Many jokes have been made about elderly women and their affinity for cats, but there is a kernel of truth here. Cats really do help relieve loneliness. Simply watch the eyes of nursing home patients when a cat is brought to visit. Their eyes light up as they pet the cat in their lap. The feeling of petting their soft fur is immensely soothing, and the antics of 'clown cats' can result in quite an entertaining visit.

Cats can be an important part of the lives of their elderly caretakers. For some, their relationship with their cat is the single most important thing in their life. The power of loving companionship to ease stress and loneliness is invaluable and immeasurable.

Also, it has been shown that cats are often quite valuable therapy animals in working with Alzheimer's patients. The act of holding and petting a cat has been shown to trigger memories in patients who are otherwise incapable of recalling certain memories.

3. Petting or brushing long hair cats can be great physical therapy for individuals with muscle disorders. Recently, long hair cats have been used with patients suffering from muscle conditions. The act of brushing a cat's thick coat can help to slowly increase flexibility and ease muscle and joint stiffness. Not only is brushing a cat's hair good for exercising certain muscles, it is also quite relaxing. The best type of cat for this type of pet therapy is said to be the long hair Persian breed.

4. Cats can help troubled youth and mental health patients who live in facilities establish healthy, non-judgmental relationships. Cats have recently been used in facilities that help troubled teens learn important life skills. Having a house pet such as a cat can help young adults learn responsibility. A loving cat can also help troubled teens establish a stable, healthy relationship. For some, this can constitute the most stable relationship in their life. Cats are also used in mental health facilities to provide its residents with a source of companionship and friendship, as well as to help teach responsibility. For some, their relationship with a cat can be life transforming.

5. The singular power of the fur and the purr. Although dogs have made excellent pet therapy animals for decades, there is nothing quite as relaxing as the luxurious fur of a cat. As most cat lovers will attest, it just begs to be combed and petted. Cat's coats tend to be much softer and thicker than dog's. The texture of a cat's coat evokes feelings of pleasure, relaxation, and wellbeing.

The unmistakable purr of the feline is another important aspect of why cats make good pet therapy animals. A cat's purr has long been associated with feelings of relaxation, warmth, and comfort. Indeed, researchers have begun doing research on the effects of a cat's purring on their owners. A cat's purr is also being credited with helping perennial insomniacs finally catch some shut-eye. In fact, a recording of a cat's soft purr is currently being marketed to individuals who have trouble falling asleep. The creators of the recording claim that the sound of a cat's purr can help almost anyone achieve a good night's rest.

Cool Gifts for the Cat Lover

Are you shopping for your cat-loving friend, neighbor, or family member, and need some ideas of what to buy? There are many gifts you can get for the Cat Lover in your life, and you can even find gifts online that can be shipped within a few days. Just wait until the recipient opens the gift you buy once you find the right one for that person.

Please read further for cat lover's gift giving ideas.

Some cat lovers like to receive calendars, greeting cards, framed pictures, scrapbooks and other published arts or graphics, especially if they include pictures of their very own cat. They also would like cat figurines, and subscriptions to various cat magazines or gift certificates to a local pet store.

When deciding to give a gift to a cat lover, be sure to find out what kind of cat that person has, or to take pictures of the cat if you already know. This may take some planning on your part. For instance, you may have to think of an excuse (such as your friend's kid's birthday, or a holiday) to go over to your friend's house, and to take pictures of that cat. You want to make sure you plan the picture taking in a way that is natural, and does not bring suspicion on the part of the cat owner. You would not want to ruin the surprise right?

Then, you can either take the pictures in to get developed by a professional, or develop the pictures yourself if you have a computer. If you have some artistic ability, you will be able to create a beautiful framed piece of art for the cat owner to hang on his or her wall, or a decorative scrapbook for that person to place on a coffee table. Either that or you can buy already made frames, or have someone make a work of art for you to give to your friend or family member, the cat lover.

The person who receives this gift will be most overjoyed, and will be grateful that you appreciate that person's love for cats. Another example of a gift to give a cat lover would be to buy that person a subscription to a magazine such as Cat Fancy. This magazine tells cat lovers everything they would want to know about cats, such as various breeds, grooming techniques, the best cat toys to buy and more. This magazine also has cat lover's stories to tell, as well as health information about various feline pets.

The list of gifts to buy for a cat lover does not stop there, however. You can also buy cat themed clothing, personalized cat (and photo) doormats, and decorative chalkboards. You can

also buy for your cat lover a personalized cat photo blanket, or a piece of rhinestone jewelry that says "I love cats" on it. Furthermore, there is a huge selection of catlike style crystal figurines and real life models of a wide variety of cat breeds.

Other cat lover's gifts would be great for the kitchen, such as paw print pet treat jars and hand painted mugs, and even dinnerware. You may also find refrigerator magnets and kitchen rugs with cat decorations on them.

For the cat lover's car there is the license plate cover that can include a saying on it such as I love cats, and have little kitten decorations surrounding its border. Furthermore, you can buy for the cat lover a suction cup cat that would stick to any car window, or "I love cat" bumpers stickers.

There is virtually no end to the amount of gifts available for you to choose from for any cat loving individual. Along with that, is the fact that you are sure to find from amongst the many different gifts displayed online one that is within your price range.

Please feel free to browse this site and others for these and other great gift giving ideas. The cat loving individual in your life will appreciate your thoughtfulness upon receiving one of these find gifts from you.

If you have more than one cat lover to purchase a gift for, feel free to check back periodically for new and different gift giving ideas.

Top Six Gifts for Cat Lovers

Do you have gift list that includes a true cat lover? If so, you're in luck! Buying for a cat lover is easier than ever, especially with the selection and specialty items available over the Internet. Before you grab the first kitty-themed item, take a moment to consider the following criteria. The more specific and personal your gift is, the more special it will be.

Before you buy a present for the cat lover on your list, consider:

What type of cat breed does the prospective recipient favor or own? Many potential gifts for cat lovers are also breed specific. If possible, purchase a gift that reminds the recipient of their favorite feline.

If you are buying a gift for someone who currently owns a cat, find out if the cat is male or female. Many cat-themed gifts are gender specific, so you will want to know what sex your recipient's cat is.

Does your recipient like to dress up your cat? If you are buying a gift for someone who likes to dress their cats in sweaters or other types of clothing, your search for an appropriate gift will be much easier. Don't assume that the recipient dresses their cat, however.

Now that you've taken a few moments to consider your recipient's cat, here are the top six gifts that any cat lover would be pleased to receive.

1. A cat-themed picture frame. What better way to express your love for your pet than putting his or her picture on display? Any cat lover would be pleased to receive a lovely picture frame to display their pride and joy. You may want to make sure your intended recipient doesn't already own too many cat picture frames. This is a popular gift to give and to receive, so it's not uncommon for avid cat lovers to own more than one cat picture frame.

2. Cat themed jewelry. It is not uncommon to run across a lovely cat brooch, pin, charm bracelet, necklace, or other piece of jewelry. Nothing could be more personal or intimate than a lovely piece of jewelry. If you have a close friend who you think would enjoy this type of gift, you will find many online retail websites dedicated to cat-themed gifts that carry an excellent selection of cat related jewelry. For an even more personal touch, you can often have these type of gifts inscribed as well.

3. Cat related stationary, desk calendar, engagement calendar, diary, or books. Every New Year, hundreds of beautifully designed calendars become available for purchase. The selection can be astounding, with hundreds of breeds and cat themes represented. This is a great choice that any cat lover would enjoy receiving, especially if you can find a calendar that represents the recipient's favorite breed. If you want to go beyond the ever-popular cat calendar, you can also purchase lovely cat-related stationary for your recipient. Another great choice is to find a nice cat-themed diary for your recipient.

If you can't find a cat calendar, stationary set, or diary that you like, consider buying the cat lover on your list a beautiful cat-themed coffee table book. Most cat lovers will delight in feasting on the gorgeous photography and text of a good cat coffee table book.

4. Cat themed clothes and coffee mugs. Cat lovers will enjoy receiving cat-themed T-shirts and sweaters. You can often find funny cat-themed coffee mugs too.

5. A work of kitty art. Cat lovers abound nowadays, so it easy to find works of art that is cat related. For the true cat lover, a lovely cat sculpture can be a wonderful and whimsical gift. You can easily find all sorts of cat-related ceramic pieces, wooden sculptures, planter, fountain, or other types of cat art. For the truly dedicated cat lover, you can even commission a local artist to complete a portrait of your friend's cat!

6. A gift subscription to Cat Fancy magazine! For the die-hard cat fanatic, a subscription to a cat themed magazine can be quite a treat. If you can't locate cat related magazines at your local newsstand, visit your local pet supplies store. You'll find other magazines besides Cat Fancy that your recipient can enjoy receiving for many issues to come.

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