

Educational Center > Behavior & Training > Behavior

5 Home Improvements Your Cat Will Love

SHARE



Many people have the impression that cats are independent, low-maintenance creatures. But the truth is that felines require substantial **interaction and enrichment** to lead healthy, happy lives.



To boost your cat's mood, ensure she's getting the proper amount of exercise and keep her mind sharp, consider some easy home upgrades.

"All cats need an environment that gives them a sense of territorial ownership, a feeling of safety, and both mental and physical stimulation," says Kate Benjamin, founder of **Hauspanther** and co-author of New York Times bestselling books **Catification** and **Catify to Satisfy**. "This is achieved through scratching, climbing, **hunting or playing**, resting, leaving their scent and having sufficient resources, like food, water and litter."

Here are five home improvement ideas that are sure to make your feline meow with joy:

Install Cat Shelves

We typically install shelves in our homes to display knick-knacks or books. But according to Rachel Malamed, a veterinary behaviorist based in Los Angeles, providing



specific shelves designed for cats is a simple home-improvement solution that offers big benefits.

“Climbing is a natural behavior for cats,” she says. “They like to perch from above where they can survey their environment for both predators and prey.”

You can purchase cat shelves from many pet retailers, but if you decide to DIY some shelves at home, Malamed recommends using cat-friendly materials on the top of the shelves. “If you are going to make your own climbing structure, sisal or carpet material are preferred by cats,” she says. “They like to scratch on these types of materials.”

Place Scratching Posts in Main Living Areas

Scratching is one of the most important activities for cats.

“Cats scratch to leave both visual and scent marks, claiming their territory,” says Benjamin. “If you don’t give



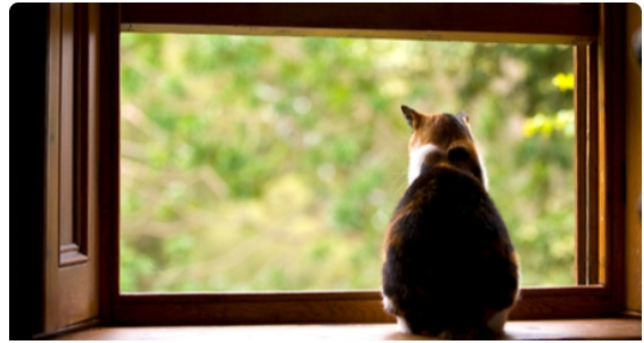
your cat an agreeable place to scratch, she will find her own spot, and you may not like it.”

To deter your cat from scratching the furniture or shredding up your drapes, place scratching posts and toys in high-traffic living areas. “Cats like to scratch where your scent is the strongest,” says Benjamin. “So consider putting scratchers near your favorite chair, the sofa, your desk or your bed.”

Create a Window Perch

Giving your feline a primetime view of the outdoors is a good way to engage her senses, says Benjamin.

“Creating a cat perch in front of a window where your cat can watch wildlife and other activity outside will keep her mentally active,” she says.



However, Benjamin stresses that pet parents should ensure they have plenty of indoor toys to fulfill their felines’ hunting instincts and prey drive.

Install a Catio

Allowing cats to roam

outdoors is dangerous, says Malamed, who explains that pet cats outside are at risk of contracting diseases, falling victim to wildlife attacks and



getting hit by cars. One way to provide felines with outdoor stimulation while keeping them safe is to install a **catio**.

“In an effort to replicate the outdoors but keep cats safe, the concept of catios, or outdoor cat enclosures, have become popular,” she says. “A catio may be a balcony or patio that is screened off that contains perches, greenery, climbing structures, fresh air and visual and olfactory access to the stimulants of the outside or natural world. Others are free standing structures that can be quite complex.”

If you don’t want to build your own catio, there are companies and contractors who specialize in building enclosures to ensure a safe and fun outdoor environment for feline family members.

Create a Designated Quiet Space

Turning a small space in your home—such as a closet or a bathroom—into a zen-like retreat for your cat is a great option for cats who appreciate some alone time.



“Giving cats a designated area where they can retreat to is so important, especially if you are entertaining or if there are other disruptions to the normal routine,” says Benjamin. “Make sure the space has items that are familiar for your cat, like a bed and a scratcher, even a litter box and water dish. She should feel comfortable and unthreatened in the space.”

The Perfect Home Environment for Your Feline

With these small additions or changes to your home, you’ll give your cat plenty of enrichment to fulfill her senses and keep her happy.



“I cringe when I hear people say ‘Oh, it’s just a cat, she doesn’t need anything special,’” says Benjamin. “People don’t give a lot of consideration to their cat’s needs when designing a home environment. It’s critical to provide cats with the things they need to not just survive, but to thrive.”