

Calm Down!

8 Ideas for a Hyperactive Cat

BY RITA REIMERS

It's a quiet night, and you're watching TV or reading at the end of a stressful workday. All of the sudden, your cat bolts across the room as if she's chasing some imaginary prey, running back and forth, and sometimes even running over you! Your usually quiet kitty then spends the next several minutes racing around with her tail hair standing on end (bottle-brush tail, I call it), something often referred to as "zoomies," until she suddenly stops as if she's run out of gas.

This type of overactivity in cats can be hilarious — unless it happens constantly. Then it can quickly become frustrating and even lead to accidental destruction around the house, if your cat starts knocking things over as she races around.

So, exactly what just happened to cause all that feline drama?

Under stimulated = hyper active

Some cat breeds are naturally very active, requiring both physical and mental stimulation all throughout the day. Bengals, Sphynx and Siamese are just a few of the breeds considered innately high-energy and hyperactive. These cats require plenty of playtime

with their human, as well as engaging self-play toys to use when they are home alone. Truly any breed of cat, left alone without toys or stimulating things to do while their humans are at work, can quickly become hyperactive once their humans come home.

Our indoor cats need, and often demand, active attention from their caretakers. Once you come home at the end of your work day, your bored cat may decide that's the perfect time to zoom around and use his pent-up energy by running a mock hunt. Cats need that playtime activity, just as much as they need cuddle time, with you.

8 ways to get calm

Don't worry! There are plenty of ways to calm the overactive kitty that are fun for you, too! Here are eight ideas you can try with your cats:

1 Playtime: Use a toy your cat can chase and/or fetch to mimic his natural hunting prowess. This works best when playtime occurs just before feeding time, giving your cat the illusion of catching his meal.

2 Puzzle toys: Putting some hard food or treats inside a puzzle toy that he has to maneuver to get food will keep his brain and body active.

3 Window perch: Cats love window perches so they can watch the world outside. Add a birdhouse, and your cat will sit at the window for hours dreaming about catching a bird. →



Word of the day: Crepuscular

You may notice that once night falls, your cat seems to perk up and become more vigorous. Cats are crepuscular, which means most active in nature at dusk and dawn, which are the prime times for catching prey for food. Although indoor cats don't hunt, they still follow their natural dispositions for activity during these times of the day.



PLAY IT UP!

Cats need mental and physical stimulation each and every day, otherwise they will use their energy stores for antics you may not fully appreciate. Here are a few of my favorite items to keep kitty busy.

All are available at Chewy.com or other pet retailers.



Hauspanther Taffy Rolls:

I love this toy, since two of my cats love to fetch and retrieve. These soft toys are the purrfect size for your cat to chase and bring back to you for another toss. \$7.99 for a 2-pack. shop.hauspanther.com



SmartKat Crackle Chute Tunnel: Cats love the sound of crackle toys, and they also love to investigate. So what could be better than a cat tunnel that crackles! \$16.49; smartykat.com



Jackson Galaxy Puma Paw Toy: Great for fetch or for your cat's solo play activities. Made from sturdy materials, your cat will love tossing these in the air or just rolling them around. \$4.45 (with catnip), \$3.95 (plain); jacksongalaxy.com

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4 Companion: If your cat is an only cat, he may benefit from having a friend to play with. Another cat, a cat-savvy dog or even a bunny would make a great companion for your cat.

5 Pet sitter visits: If you work very long hours, try hiring a cat sitter to do drop-by playtime visits during the day, so your cat isn't so bored and needy when you get home.

6 Catnip: It may cause a little extra activity at first, but it won't last long. Soon he'll be blissed out and mellow.

7 Pheromones: If nothing above seems to completely calm down the hyper to an acceptable level, cat pheromone plug-ins or sprays may take the edge of any anxiety that may be feeding into your cats hyper state.

8 Vet visit: If you suspect your cat's antics are more than just boredom, a visit to your vet may be in order to rule out any organic issues.

Once you get your cat into a regular routine of activity and provide him with some self-entertainment, his crazy hyperactivity should calm down quite a lot. He will never stop those zoomies altogether, but then who would want to do that?

Watching cats zoom around for a few minutes makes people laugh more than The Three Stooges! Just watch some of those YouTube videos and you'll see what I mean. For me, coming home to my cat's antics is the purrfect way de-stress at the end of a long day. Laughing with my feline friends really is the best medicine.



Rita Reimers is a multi-cat behavior expert, author and owner of JFCATS.com, a feline health and wellness company. Get her advice exclusively by joining Club Cattitude at RitaReimers.com. Follow Rita on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram @MultiCatExpert and on YouTube @RitaReimers.

