

Get the Most Out of Playtime

BY RITA REIMERS



Is your cat a party pooper? When you get out the toys, does he just stare at you, wondering why he can't just take a nap? Or does he play with a toy for 3 seconds then never touch it again?

While most young kittens are bundles of energy who seem to play constantly, some adult cats are not all

that interested in playing. For others, it's a matter of finding just the right toy to get them off the sofa and moving. Assuming you get a clean bill of health from your veterinarian, getting those seemingly lazy cats to get active again is a matter of trial and error with toys.

To help figure out which toys might be best suited to cat's play style, let's play a game of our own: "How Does Your Cat Like to Play?"

1 Does your cat enjoy looking out the window, chattering whenever he sees a bird or squirrel nearby?

That means your cat enjoys the hunt and would most enjoy toys that simulate the hunting experience. Toys with movement that looks like birds or mice will get your cat's motor running. Feathers, wands with toy birds or mice and small toys that move on their own would be purrfect. You can also set up a bird feeder near a window, so your cat can do some bird-watching.

2 Does your cat like to drop toys at your feet or leave them in his water or food bowls?

Your cat most likely loves to bring you his hunting spoils, so small stuffed toys, small balls or any toy he can carry



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around in his mouth would be most appealing. My cat, Simba, likes to play fetch with those tiny hollow golf balls or his favorite red straw. He will bring it to me over and over again so I can toss it for him to chase.

3 Have you seen your cat couch surfing, scooting along the bottom of the sofa as he pulls himself forward?

Your cat would love full-body toys that he can really get his paws around. Full-sized plush toys, long, catnip-filled kick sticks and scratching boxes would be a favorite here. Your cat can roll around with them and practice “killing” his toy with his back feet (aka the

bunny kick). Want some extra fun? Just add some catnip.

4 Is your cat the first to investigate new objects and/or push them to see them crash to the floor?

Highly inquisitive cats like to investigate their world. Breeds like Bengals and Savannahs need mental stimulation just as much as they need to run and jump. These cats enjoy working a puzzle toy (such as a treat ball filled with yummys), kitty tunnels to investigate and hide inside or any self-play toy that includes motion and sound.

5 Does your cat get a case of the zoomies every now and then?

Get him chasing that laser light (plus give him something to catch, like a treat, at the end), toss some treats for him to chase or offer self-moving toys, such as battery-operated toy mice or birds. Cat trees are also a must, so he can run up to the top and watch his world from above while plotting his next dash around the house.

6 Have you noticed your cat doing all of these activities?

If your cat enjoys all of these activities, then you are one lucky cat parent. Just about any toy will do, and he will enjoy getting all kinds of new toys to play with, as long as he can interact with you in the process.

Now that we've pinpointed what it takes to get your cat's motor running, get out there and stock up on the toys that will make him come alive. Engage your cat in active play at least once a day to help him expend his pent-up energy and sharpen his appetite. You've won the game, and the prize is a happy, healthy cat who is also fun, active and enjoys playing with you. 🐾



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Swap THEM OUT!

No matter how your cat prefers to play, switch out his toys often so he doesn't get bored with them. Fun, new toys can really make a difference and make playtime much more exciting.

