Interactive CAT Play

by **Dr. Mikel Delgado**

Toys that are left lying on the floor are "dead". They are boring.
Fun toys are like **prey!** They are usually small and quiet, and **they move!**

Playing is an **interactive** experience: a simulated hunting experience that gives cats physical exercise and stimulates their brains. We tailor our play to our individual cat's needs. Are they a generalist or a specialist?

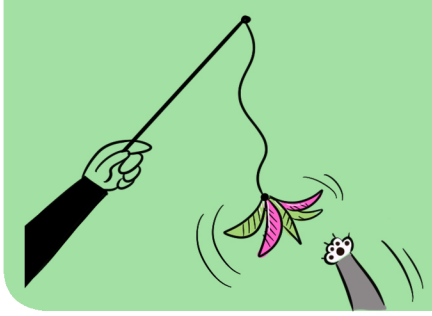
Playing is also a way to bond with our cat. Not all cats like to be cuddled.

Make play a daily habit or activity. eg, before their dinner or bedtime, and whenever they have the zoomies! Just as dogs need to go out for walks and to sniff, cats need **enrichment** and shouldn't be sleeping all day.

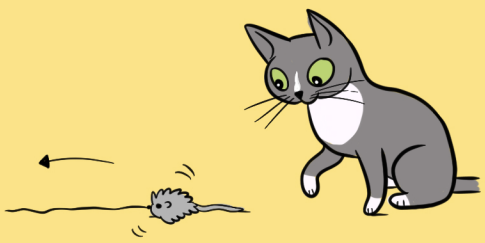
Prey Types

for the SPECIALIST HUNTER*

feathers eg, Da Bird



mouse-like eg, Cat Catcher

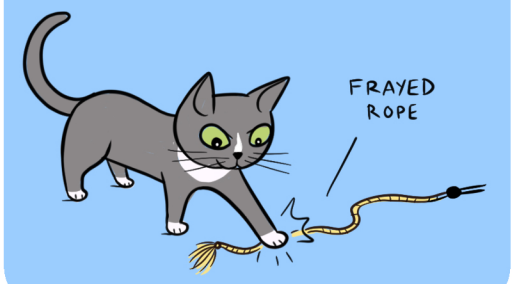


drag it away or across

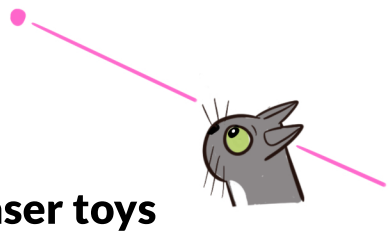
bug-like eg, Cat Dancer

good for shy cats
jiggle gently

snake-like eg, Bamboozler



food puzzles
Introduce as a choice and never force. Many cats enjoy these.
foodpuzzlesforcats.com



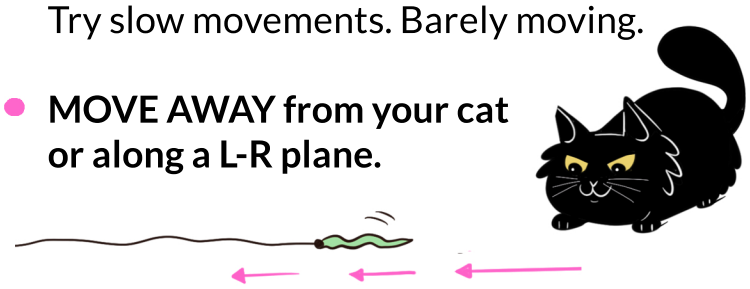
laser toys
...can be frustrating because cats can't catch them. Best use for short periods as a warm-up, then switch to a real toy.

NOVELTY: Rotate the toys to keep things interesting!

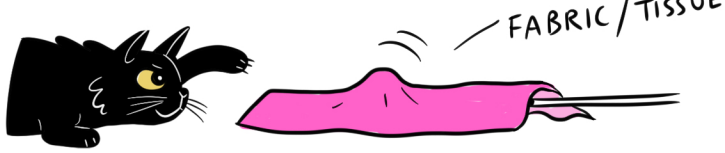
*For safety reasons, interactive toys with string/wire should be stored securely after play.

Play Tips

- **ALTERNATE SPEED OF MOVEMENT.**
  Try slow movements. Barely moving.
- **MOVE AWAY from your cat or along a L-R plane.**



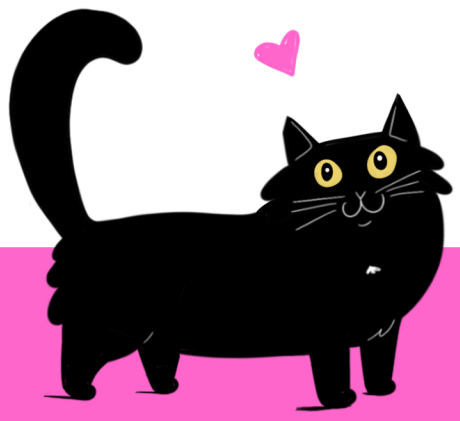
- **MOVE UNDER SOMETHING.**



- **Sounds of RUSTLING or CRUNCHINESS are exciting!**
- **LET THEM WAIT.**
  Don't make it too easy or it will be boring.

- **NOT TOO CLOSE.**
  Cats can see the toy best when it is a few feet away.
- **Give the FULL HUNTING EXPERIENCE**
  - paws, mouth, and whiskers!

- **Most importantly, HAVE FUN playing with your little hunter!**



Have you played with your cat TODAY?

whatyourcatwants.com

illustrated by Lili Chin 2021

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