

HOW TO PROPERLY PLAY WITH YOUR CAT

Interactive play is a powerful tool to help your cat in many situations. It can help strengthen the bond between you and your cat, get your cat comfortable and adjusted to new places and situations, serve as exercise and stress relief, and provide much needed mental stimulation and enrichment. It's important to learn how to best play with your cat, since cats have a very specific style of play that caters to their needs.

WHAT DO CATS NEED OUT OF PLAY? 🐾

Cats are natural predators, and it's their instinct to want to stalk, hunt, catch, and consume their prey. Since domestic cats do not get to naturally hunt, they often need to hunt in the form of play as an outlet, or could become stressed and pent up. Simply waving a wand style toy around can frustrate your cat and won't really fulfill their needs, so it's important to learn how to properly play with these types of toys to make sure your cat gets the most satisfaction they can out of their play sessions!

HOW TO PLAY WITH WAND STYLE/ LURE TOYS

- 🐾 Hold the pole and move the interactive toy so that the target at the end of the string wiggles, slides, darts, creeps, or flies around the room. When you move the toy like prey, it will stimulate the hunter in the cat.
- 🐾 Let the cat stalk the toy quietly. Give her time to size up the prey before the chase begins. Try to move the toy away from or across their visual field, as this will most realistically mimic the prey and get the cat moving.
- 🐾 Don't dangle the toy right in front of your cat's face! This is annoying to most cats. Experiment with movement and speed— for example, quick movements followed by slow crawls.
- 🐾 Keep in mind that cats' vision is best at least 12 inches away from their eyes. Any closer and they "see" with their whiskers.
- 🐾 After a good 10-15 minute play session, allow the cat to "catch" and "kill" the toy. Drop the wand and let them have it for at least a minute or two supervised. Then trade the wand for another toy like a little mouse and remove it from the area and put it securely away. This helps to keep the toy novel and your play therapy exciting, as well as keeping your cat from eating anything on the teaser that could prove hazardous such as feathers or strings.
- 🐾 If treats are permitted, you may throw a treat instead of trading for another toy, helping to simulate the end of their hunting session and the reward that comes with it.