

## Bored Silly



Have you ever had a kitten or cat actually climb your drapes? Or perhaps, your precious feline discovered the toilet paper roll in the bathroom and actually TP'd your entire apartment? And then there is one of the worse antics to come home to after a hard day at work – the completely full kitchen trash can that you forgot to empty the night before that is now strewn across the room.

All of these behaviors are caused by one common denominator: boredom. A bored cat tends to become a destructive cat and so you have to start looking at things from the cat's perspective. You keep your cat indoors because you want to keep him safe from the elements that can end his life very quickly. You know the evils of declawing, so your little friend has all four paws with claws, along with fresh water, plenty of food and a nice, snuggly bed. So what's missing?

The answer to that question, is the same answer you would get think if you were stuck home each and every day with nothing to do but eat and sleep. No television, no books, no telephone – just you, the four walls and food. So the next step is to take the boredom out of kitty's life and make staying home fun. It's time to start thinking up intellectual challenges and stimulation with enough variance so the cat is always having to think. Here are some of the things we do when we leave the house for the day.

My husband and I own a collection of cat DVD's that we have gotten through the internet, at cat shows and at various craft shows we go to. We make sure that we vary the DVD's so they don't get bored watching the same fish or bird every day. We also limit the DVD's to two times a week so it's something new. When we leave for the day, we simply pop in the DVD and choose continuous play.

We also move around the various cat trees and condos we have throughout the house. It's amazing how every time we move one of their pieces of furniture to another side of a room, how the cats congregate to the "new" structure in the room and find new interest in it. We try to do this at least once a week.

We have lots of toys that we take turns putting out – much like you would do with a toddler who has a short attention span. Some of the toys are man made – simple boxes and balls with treats hidden inside that makes the cat think about how to get the food out. You can take an empty water bottle and cut a hole in the center, allowing treats to fall out if the cat is vigilant in its attention to get the treats.

You can also take an old shoe box and cut the sides of the box a little smaller than a ping pong ball and fill the box with treats and balls. Tape the lid shut and let your kitty paw at the balls and forage for the treats. The ping pong balls will act as obstacles to provide some mental stimulation – and that’s just what you are looking to do.

Hide toys and treats throughout the house in different places every day so your cat can go hunting and one of the best toys is ping pong balls in the bathtub (empty of course). This can provide hours of entertainment for kittens and young cats that have energy to burn. Floatable wind up toys in a water filled kitchen or bathroom sink to bat at is also a great toy.

Using a water fountain is also a fun stimulation for the cats. If your cat is not afraid of the fountain, they can play in the stream of water and many water loving cats are happy to do so. We have a cat that uses her paws to cup the water from the fountain and drink from it!

Once a month, grab a tree branch and hide treats inside it and leave it in your spare room or in the kitchen for the cats to play in. It’s like bringing a bit of the out of doors inside for your cats. Paper bags (NOT PLASTIC AND NO HANDLES) are always a favorite. And a large cardboard box can be so many things to a curious and playful cat.

The trick is to not leave everything around all of the time. It is important for these exercises to be new and fun. We have done things like put a pool ladder in our spare room for the cats to climb and we took two pallets, put them together and made an inverted V climbing space, much like the obstacle courses we see on Survivor. Anything that we can come up creative and new, the cats always enjoy trying to figure out.

I have yet to have a kitten or cat climb my drapes.

[http://www.listnow.com/helpingpaws/articles/article\\_338.html](http://www.listnow.com/helpingpaws/articles/article_338.html)

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