



## FRUSTRATION IN CATS

### 1. Physical Exercise 2. Cognitive Enrichment

**Thank you for adopting an energetic cat!**

Although cats are known to sleep a lot, some are much more active than others and need a lot of physical and mental exercise. Your cat has been known to get a little frustrated here at the shelter when under-stimulated. A frustrated cat may express their frustration in the form of door dashing, destructive scratching, excessive vocalizing, scratching, or biting. Below are some tips to keep your cat relaxed and everyone in your home happy.

#### Physical Exercise

1. Wand toys are a great tool. Because you're on the other end, you can easily mimic the movement of prey and keep your cat interested. This will give your cat an outlet for their desire to hunt or chase.
2. The only limit to what you can give your cat to play with is your own imagination. Cat toys don't need to be expensive. In fact, cats love to play with household objects. They might like to bat around cotton balls, dry pasta, tinfoil balls, empty pill bottles, etc. If they lose interest, engaging with the toys yourself might be more fun for them—cats love to chase! Throw their little toys around (down the hallway, up the stairs, on to the furniture).
3. The ability to climb and perch is essential for cats. Invest in a cat tree or two—or build your own! The more vertical space they have, the better.
4. Scratching is another need that all cats have. They're going to find something to scratch whether you provide it or not—so unless you want your door frames and furniture torn up, it's best to have something appropriate for them to scratch. The 3-foot standalone scratching posts don't cut it for a lot of cats. The ideal height for a scratching post is tall enough that your cat can stand on their back legs stretch out while scratching. Of course, different cats have different preferences and some prefer to scratch horizontal surfaces.



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**A note on laser pointing toys:** Although cats may look like they're having a great time "hunting" the little red dot, they often get very frustrated with this. They're chasing something that can never be caught, and this can be frustrating. There are plenty of other ways to engage your cat that don't involve non-existent "prey."

## Cognitive Enrichment

1. Hang and fill a bird feeder a outside the window where your cat tree is set up.
2. Food enrichment: Instead of leaving a bowl of food down all the time, consider putting your cat on scheduled feedings. If they aren't grazing whenever they choose, they'll be more motivated to work for their food. Using puzzle feeders for cats is a great way to engage their brain. There are a large number of different puzzle feeders on the market. You can also use more inexpensive methods like putting their kibble in an empty ice cube tray, a tissue box, or an empty water bottle, and their wet food in to a coffee mug lying on its side. These homemade versions will still challenge them to figure out how to get to their food.
3. Cats can be trained just like dogs (and any other animals!) Search YouTube for ideas on what tricks ttrain and how to do it. Bonus points: Try to slowly desensitize your cat to a harness so that they can go for walks outside or sniff around the backyard!

If you've tried all of these strageties and are still having trouble, or need help implementing them, call the Behavior Department at Lollypop Farm to get more advice over the phone or to schedule an in-home behavior consultation. They can be reached 585-223-1330 x153.

### 1. Physical Exercise

Some cats are just more active than others, and need physical play and activity to keep them satisfied. Wand toys, cat trees, and scratching posts are all great ways to engage a physical-type feline!

### 2. Cognitive Enrichment

There are many ways to keep your cat mentally stimulated, including bird watching, feeding enrichment, and trick training!



Pet Peeves  
Behavior  
Helpline:  
585-295-2999



Training Classes  
at Lollypop Farm

Classes Offered in Fairport, Brighton, and Webster

Learn more: (585) 223-1330 x153 • [info@lollypop.org](mailto:info@lollypop.org) • [lollypop.org/behavior](http://lollypop.org/behavior)

