

Enrichment for Cats

What is enrichment?

Enrichment is anything that improves the quality of your cat's life. It may involve an increase or a decrease in stimulation. Enrichment activities encourage your cat to participate in behaviors that are natural to them. In other words, they allow your cat to be a cat!



Engage All Five Senses

Choose a variety of activities that engage all the senses. Variety ensures that your cat's mental and physical needs are satisfied. Daily enrichment is just as important as physical exercise.

Scents: Your cat sees in scents. Use your cat's sense of smell to engage their brain.

1. Bring in cat-safe flowers and grass from outside to let your cat investigate the smells.
2. Give them a treat treasure hunt! Hide treats around your home for your cat to find.
3. Introduce your cat to fresh or dry herbs like dill, oregano, and rosemary. Sprinkle herbs on a carpet or towel for your cat to enjoy.

Sounds: Cats have very sensitive hearing, and can be easily overstimulated by sound.

1. Play soothing, [cat-specific music](#) at low volumes to entertain your cats.
2. Open the window a crack to engage your cat's ears in the outside world.
3. Electronics create high-frequency sounds that can annoy your cat. Give them a break by shutting off your devices.

Sights: Cats appreciate interesting and stimulating visuals, just like humans!

1. Watch [Cat TV](#), specifically designed to entertain your cat.
2. Place a bird feeder outside a window where your cat can watch the activity.
3. Set up a fish tank in your home so the cat can watch the fish swim. You can even try motorized fish that move around tanks in life-like ways!

Taste: Variety is the spice of life!

1. Try introducing your cat to novel foods like melon, olives, or sardines.
2. Rotate your usual treat types to keep them interested.
3. Coat one of your cat's toys in some of their favorite foods to let them experience the taste in a new context.

Touch: Touch is something that cats enjoy, but prefer to be in control of instigating.

1. Vary the materials, heights, and location of your cat's scratching post.
2. Provide different surfaces for rolling on, such as grass, blankets, cool tiles, and sand.
3. Brush your cat with a wire-bristle brush. Pair with treats to make this even more fun!

For more resources, check out <https://sfhumanesociety.org/behavior-library/>