

21 simple tips for complete cat happiness



A little ebook full of things that cats *really* like!

21 simple tips for complete cat happiness

This ebook is dedicated to Chunky: companion,
comedian and dear friend.



What *do* cats like?

It depends on the cat. Their tastes vary as much as ours do.

I know a cat who adores sitting in an inch of cold bath water. I've met another who hides secret supplies of earthworms under her owner's living room rug. And a risk loving cat dedicated to hurling himself time and time again out of the same third storey window to the patio below, grinning all the way down.

Why? We will never know. The ways of cats are weird. But there are *some* things that *most* cats like and dislike. General stuff that, if you bear it in mind, will help you make your cat really happy.

Here's 21 simple tips for complete cat happiness.

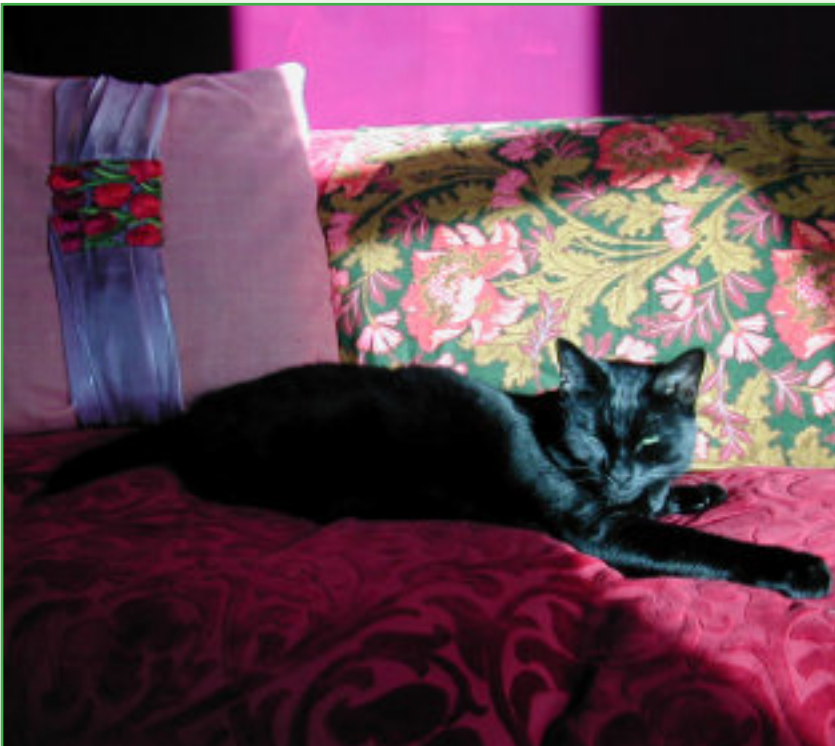


1. Give more, get more...

Cats are just like most creatures - including humans. The more time, care and love you invest in them, the more *you'll* get out of the relationship.

Paying attention to his or her likes and dislikes makes your cat appreciate and trust you more. Happy, respected cats are loving, vocal, playful and happy to involve themselves in your everyday life.

On the other hand, if you ignore your cat it'll ignore you right back...





2. Testing, testing, 123...

Cats have an extremely acute sense of smell, which they use to get a detailed picture of their world.

They like taking time to find out, via smells, who and what's out there before venturing through the door or cat flap.

They get stressed if you shout at them, rush them or shoo them out of the door before they've had the chance to suss out what's going on outdoors, so let them take their time.



3. Leave me be unless I say so!

He's fast asleep or just lounging around. But *you* fancy a cuddle.

If your cat's in the mood they'll open an eye, stretch out a paw, roll onto their back, grin at you or wave their front paws around.

If they're *really* up for it they'll stand up, miaow or come over to you. A classic cat 'hello' is a raised tail. Tails up means they're definitely feeling sociable and they're glad to see you.

If your cat isn't in the mood, they'll pretend you're not there and remain determinedly asleep. If you pester them they'll take themselves off somewhere more peaceful.

They're a lot like us really...



4. I can't *help* clawing things!

Don't punish your cat for clawing the furniture, your legs or whatever. They won't understand. They dig their claws in instinctively so telling them to stop is a bit like telling *you* to stop breathing.

Clawed furniture is part of the deal when you have a cat. Some cats do it a lot, others never. It's down to the individual. Just as poop scooping - much less pleasant - is part and parcel of having a dog!

Some cats prefer their own scratching post, others will ignore their scratching post and head for the arm of your sofa every time. C'est la vie - they're worth it!



5. Secret purring signals

Scientists have recently discovered that cats' purring is *very* clever stuff.

The loud component of their purr hides a sound that resonates at exactly the same frequency as a baby's cry.

Few humans can resist. Which is why when your cat purrs you can't help but stroke him.



6. I want to be alone

If your cat was brought up with their siblings or other kittens, they'll be much more tolerant of other cats.

Unlike dogs, cats are naturally solitary rather than pack animals. Some cats are so unhappy sharing their territory with another that they'll leave home.

Grown up cats adjust to new kittens much easier than they do to other adult cats.



7. I'm insecure!

Sometimes cats spray urine around the house.

They're not doing it because they're naughty, wilful, cheeky or dirty. They do it when their home security has been breached, and they do it to make themselves feel more secure by making your home smell familiar.

Instead of telling your cat off, try to work out what's made them unhappy and fix it. Time and patience does the trick.

A new baby, a house move, another animal, being bashed by a strange cat every time they go through the cat flap, even scary smells brought in on your bag or shoes. All these can make your cat feel insecure.

If your cat is being bullied, accompany them when they go outside for a few days until they get their confidence back. And chase the intruder off so it's clear to your cat whose side you're on!



8. Dogs!

Cats and dogs can get along just fine provided they've grown up together. If they haven't, forget it. It'll probably end in tears!

Most cats will react aggressively to a dog unless they're good friends. But their aggressive behaviour is designed to prevent conflict, not encourage it. They prefer to scare enemies off than fight.

If your cat decides to fight a dog, the dog will almost always come off worse!



9. Getting to know my patch

In the wild, cats have a huge hunting range and they patrol large areas of land.

They're extremely good at mentally 'mapping' their territory but it takes a while. That's why cats don't like moving house much, and often take a few months to settle into a new home.

If you move house, give your cat loads of extra love and treats. Keep them indoors for a while until they seem to be calm and used to their new place. Then accompany them into the garden a few times so they can explore properly with your support. You don't need to do anything elaborate. Just sit out with a book or a cuppa while they mosey around.



10. Bored, bored, bored

Many people think cats can entertain themselves. But, just like dogs, if they're bored they get depressed. Some pull out their own fur, others get skin diseases or stomach upsets. Worse still, they'll poo on your floor in protest!

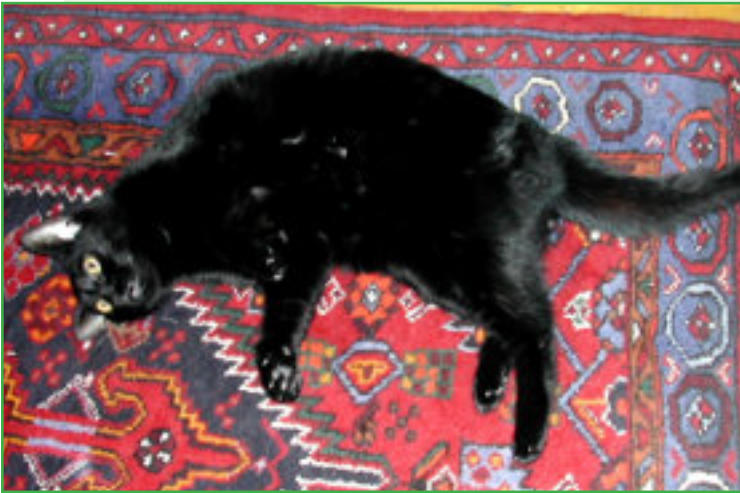
Cats like to spend time outdoors. If your cat can't go out, make sure you spend plenty of time playing. You don't need to buy expensive, elaborate toys and games. They enjoy chasing simple things just as much. Try a piece of string or a shoelace with a knot in the end.



11. Wanna get high?

Catnip is brilliant. Most cats go completely doolally when faced with a catnip toy.

Stroke them with a handful of crushed fresh catnip and they go mad with pleasure... squirming, miaowing and rolling around until they're exhausted. Really funny, and completely harmless!



12. Catfood? Pah!

Cats like all sorts of food. They're like humans in that some are sweet toothed, although apparently they're the only animal that can't taste sweetness. Some are vegetable lovers and others even eat citrus fruit... which they're supposed to detest!

I've known cats who beg for black stuffed olives, cheese, coffee cake, biscuits, peanuts, chocolate... you name it.

Small amounts of their favourite weird foods are fun for a treat!



13. Watch out for my claws

If your cat gets their claws caught in your jumper, they can panic. They hate getting snarled up in fabric. Stay calm and gently un-hook them.



14. I brought you a gift...

Some cats hunt more than others, bringing their bedraggled and bloody prey into the house.

They're not bringing you a gift. It's more likely that they instinctively drag dead mice and birds indoors to save for later.

They don't play their prey to death because they're wasteful, wicked or cruel. Whethert they're hungry or not, it's pure instinct and an important element of cats' natural born hunting behaviour.



15. Little and often

In the wild cats spend most of their time hunting and eating. So in the home they like to eat little and often.

It's horrid being hungry, so leave enough food out for them to return to on and off throughout the day.

They like dry, crunchy food as well as tinned food because it helps keep their teeth clean.



16. Bury it deep!

Like us, cats like to poo and pee in private. Watch a cat doing its business and it'll actually look *embarrassed*.

Burying their waste means they don't advertise their presence through smell too much. Before they were domesticated, burying poop was a great way to stay invisible to predators.

Put your cat's litter tray somewhere quiet and private rather than in a busy thoroughfare. Otherwise they might rebel and do it somewhere horribly unsuitable!

Keep the litter tray well away from your cat's food bowl. They're extremely fussy about cleanliness and don't like to eat near their loo... then again, neither would you!



17. Somewhere warm to sleep

Because cats originated in the desert, they love to sleep somewhere warm. Thankfully most people don't put their cats outside at night any more - they hate the cold!

Yours will probably find a handful of safe, cosy, quiet places to sleep around your home. There's no real need to buy a special cat bed, although most of them seem to appreciate the hammock style of bed that hangs over a radiator.

Many cats chop and change their favourite sleeping place, snoozing in one place for a week or two before choosing an alternative.



19. I'm safe in a high place...

Cats instinctively head for high ground when they're scared. Getting up high gives them a good vantage point and puts them out of harm's way.

If your cat is shy, shelves and other high surfaces might be just the thing. Let your cat get up high whenever they want to and bear in mind that they won't feel like coming down until they think they're safe!



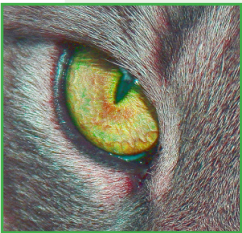
20. I don't do eye contact!

Cats naturally regard prolonged eye contact as a threat while dogs and humans see it as a sign of openness and trust. If you want to attract a shy cat, or make it feel safe, look away.

If you look your kitten in the eye from its early days it'll be familiar with being 'stared' at and won't mind at all. Even so, if they're not in the mood for interaction they'll either look away or close their eyes so *they can't see you!*

Cats aren't unfriendly. They're just small, aware of the risks of being small and genetically programmed to look after themselves very effectively.

Many people think cats are far too 'independent' and don't 'need' people. They do - they're just a bit wary until they learn, by experience not training, that it's OK not to be.



21. You *can* train me!

Just like dogs, Cats learn fast that certain ways of behaving gets them treats, affection, food and warmth.

It's possible to train your cat but they'll only learn if you bribe them like crazy with delicious rewards. If you get impatient or shout at them, they'll never learn. So exercise patience, gentleness and kindness.

