

How Can I Get My Lazy Cat to Exercise?

CatChannel expert Jeanne Adlon, professional cat sitter, offers some fun kitty-cardio suggestions.

By Jeanne Adlon

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Q: How can I motivate my older and lazy cat to get some exercise?

A: Exercise is good for all of us, including our kitties. Unfortunately, sometimes we have to be creative to get their paws moving. I remember one of my cat-sitting charges, Betsy, was a beautiful semi-longhaired tortoise shell. Like many of us, she had a few pounds to lose. When I would arrive at her home I'd usually find Betsy sound asleep in her favorite spot. It was obvious she was not interested in movement, let alone "working out."

Then on one visit, I noticed paw prints all over the glass door leading to the home's outdoor terrace. A bird feeder had been added to terrace and that had definitely gotten Betsy's attention. With Betsy inside, the birds were perfectly safe, but she could pretend to chase them and get some needed stimulation while having fun.

I find that most indoor cats welcome interactive play, but we do not always have the time to be their social director. The bird-feeder option will also work for those of you who do not have a terrace. You can buy a small one that can attach to the outside of a window. Make sure you do not put it near an open window with just a screen. Cats can tear through screens and, as I often say, they do not come equipped with parachutes.

Many of my clients also tell me that they set up specially designed cat videos on a timer for their cats to enjoy while they are away. These videos literally bring the outdoors inside with scenes of fast-moving birds, bees and small animals. Paper bags and boxes are always fun, as are small toys that make noise. There are even toys that will hold a favorite food treat inside them - that is a great way to motivate your cat to chase them.

No matter how creative you are about exercise, I find that cats get bored easily, so change things around often. Also, don't think you have to spend a lot of money. Sometimes the simplest toys are best.

Jeanne's Tip of the Week:

For interactive play with your kitty that will not wear you out, try a laser toy. My cats love them and I can relax in my favorite chair while doing it. More tips [Return to Jeanne Adlon's homepage.](#)