

Fitness Plan for Your Feline

The new year is a great time to get your cat in tip-top shape.

By Erika Sorocco

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We tend to trick ourselves into thinking that this will be the year that we create a fitness plan that will assist us in losing those 10 extra pounds we gained during the holiday season; unfortunately, we rarely make good on those plans. This year, however, your fitness plan is definitely going to be a bit different, because it will revolve entirely around your feline, and making sure that he stays in perfect shape that will keep him healthy and happy.

Step 1

Before beginning your feline on any type of fitness plan, the best idea is to schedule an appointment with your veterinarian for kitty to undergo a physical. This will give you – and your cat – the green light to get started. Pay your vet a visit armed with an assortment of questions, the first being about your cat's weight, and whether or not it is recommended for him to lose any. The second is finding out about a specific diet, and daily calorie count. During this visit, your veterinarian should examine kitty for signs of arthritis, and may even feel that it's necessary to run some blood work. It may seem like a lot, but it's essential in ensuring that your cat is ready to undergo a feline boot camp, of sorts.

Step 2

Persistence is key. In the beginning, your cat may seem lazy, or uninterested in performing any type of physical activity – that's OK! The main thing is that you keep encouraging your cat to get involved, and move a little. It's common for overweight or older cats to move a little slower. But as you continue working with him, he is destined to become more active and actually enjoy your little one-on-one fitness sessions.

Step 3

Hit the pet store. Toy stores are where we pick up toys for children, but let's face it: Our cats are like children to us, so when we want to pick up a little treat for them, we head to the pet shop. Sure, you can use crinkled up newspaper, bottle caps, even stuffed animals to play with your cat and get him moving. But if you really want to keep him interested in exercise, making a few special purchases is key. A cat dancer or laser pen are two of the most enjoyable ways to interest your cat – and your best bet if you're trying to increase kitty's activity level.

Step 4

Stick to a routine. They may not know how to tell time, but cats like routine. Not only does it keep them more pacified throughout the day when they know that they'll be receiving attention soon, but it also makes them more inclined to participate in playtime when it occurs. While routine is essential, don't allow your play activities and fitness program to grow stagnant. Your cat will become uninterested in being active over time if he is constantly bombarded with the same activities. Change it up a bit from week to week to keep him interested and involved.

Step 5

Stop aggression. Young kittens or overly excited cats are prone to become aggressive. If you see your cat displaying signs of aggression, take a step back and stop showering him with attention. Keep in mind what you were doing when such aggression took place, and remember to avoid the same situation in the future. The only way to keep fitness fun is if both you and your cat are enjoying it – and being bitten or scratched is certainly not enjoyable!

Use these steps to get your cat on the right track, and you – and kitty – will be on your way to a healthier, fun and fitness-filled life!

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