

Build Your Own Cat Tree

Enhance your cats' lives with a cat tree you make yourself.

By Jennifer Williams, Ph.D.

Indoor cats can drive owners crazy clawing furniture, climbing curtains and jumping onto countertops. Though they frustrate their owners, these cats aren't misbehaving, they're displaying natural behaviors in an unnatural environment. In the wild, cats sharpen their claws on tree trunks and climb trees.

"Cats are 3-D animals — and need more than the 2-D environment they get when they keep all four feet on the floor," says Nicholas Dodman, a veterinarian and head of animal behavior at Tufts University's Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine in N. Grafton, Mass. "It's best to go with the flow of nature and give them what they want and need."

Cat trees provide a 3-D way for indoor cats to safely pursue their instincts. Most pet stores sell cat trees, but some owners opt to build their own. Anne Kolazyk of South Bend, Ind., built a cat tree as a gift for her son's two cats because she wanted to make something unique. Some owners need a cat tree that fits inside their home, and others want the tree to match their home décor.

****For the full article, pick up the May 2007 issue of CAT FANCY.****

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