

## Mission Impossible?

**You can teach your cat to do tricks.**

*By Kristin A. Grant*

Sit! Stay! Fetch! These commands likely conjure images of obedient pets, just not of the feline variety. Imagining a cat prancing or staying put on demand might seem as improbable as teaching an old pooch a new trick, but whether the adage about dogs holds true or not, experts agree on one surprising fact: Cats indeed can learn tricks.

“Owners can certainly teach their cats tricks,” says Ilana Reisner, DVM, Ph.D., American College of Veterinary Behaviorists diplomate and assistant professor of behavioral medicine at the University of Pennsylvania veterinary school. “Whether something serious or silly, it’s all about taking advantage of basic operant conditioning [repetitive, reward-based training].”

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**\*\*Get the May 2009 issue of CAT FANCY to read the full article.\*\***