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Environmental Enrichment for Indoor Cats

There is great debate over which cats indoor or outdoor cats are happier. However, there is no contest that indoor cats live longer, healthier lives. Some believe that indoor cats are bored and unhappy, which many times is untrue. A few ways you can make sure your cat is well stimulated are below.

SLEEP AND REST

- Cat's sleep approximately 15hrs per a day! It's important that you provide cats a place to relax (Ex: Perches, rugs, chairs, beds, boxes, cat hammocks, condos, cat trees...). If you have more than one cat you need to provide multiple areas for them to relax away from one another.

GROOMING

- A cat's average day will be consumed by 4 hours of grooming. This is normal behavior for coat care, parasite removal and more importantly social interaction with other cats and their owners.
- Cats that have cat friends will groom each other on the head and neck. Those that don't have a cat friend may rely on their owner to do such (Remember not all cats will like to be groomed).

HUNTING

- If your entire cat's food is in a bowl there is no need for your cat to do this behavior. To encourage this behavior there are puzzle toys available, you can place dishes on higher areas, or hide treats/food throughout the household.
- There are also water fountains that are available that may encourage cats to drink more and these provide enrichment as well. Be sure to offer more than one water bowl, as some cats don't like to drink where they eat.

ROAMING

- Cats will walk an average of 50 minutes per a day if given the opportunity.
- Provide them accessibility to ramps, stairways, cat trees or other adventures to allow them to get their exercise.

PLAY

- Offer a variety of toys for your cat to play with, some like balls while others will like dangling toys from doors. Some cats even enjoy playing fetch!
- Try to offer play time with you as well for a change of pace. Either with a laser pointer, cat dancer or other toys.



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SEE, HEAR, SMELL

- You can easily offer sight stimulation for your indoor cats by making windowsills available to them – cats love to watch birds, squirrels and other outdoor creatures.
- Offer a variety of toys that have different sounds – maybe bring some out for special playtime use only!
- Catnip is an easy way to offer smell to cats!

Other resources:

- The Ohio State University – “Indoor Pet Initiative” <http://indoorpet.osu.edu/>
- The Cat’s House -- <http://www.thecatshouse.com/>
- Premier’s Cat toys -- <http://store.petsafe.net/pet-care/toys/cat-toys>