



GREATER BIRMINGHAM
HUMANE SOCIETY

Pet Resource Library

Play Aggression

Play is used to practice hunting skills, such as stalking, swatting at, pouncing on, and biting. Although it may seem rough and certainly can hurt, play aggression is typically not mean-spirited. Seen mostly in young, active cats that live in one-cat homes, play aggression is often a result of boredom and a lack of appropriate outlets. By providing your cat with an interactive environment and scheduled play activities, you can help stop the aggressive outbursts. Things that can help:

FUN AND GAMES

- Interactive playtime: Scheduled playtime twice a day can help satisfy your cat's need to hunt.
- Toys: A variety of cat toys, boxes and paper bags can all be a great source of fun.
- Puzzle feeders, such as the Kong, are a great way to burn off extra energy.
- Out the window: Setting up a place for your cat to sit and watch the world out a window can provide hours of entertainment.

FELINE COMPANION

- There are situations in which adding a second cat may solve the problem. Pick a cat with a similar energy level and play style. Take time to introduce them properly to ensure they get off on the right foot and become friends.

CAT TIMEOUTS

- If your cat begins to play with you in a rough manner, don't look or talk to your cat. Instead, get up and slowly walk out of the room. Do this every time your cat acts in an aggressive manner.

BE READY

- Knowing when your cat is likely to engage in rough play will mean that you can be proactive. Use interactive play during times of high activity to use up energy. If your cat likes to jump out at you from certain places, you can redirect this surprise with paper balls. Throw the paper ball in the opposite direction to encourage your cat to chase that instead of you.



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REMEMBER

- Stop moving when “under attack.” Cats are triggered by movement and trying to get away or physically remove the cat may be taken as play.
- Use toys instead of hands and feet. Allowing your cat to target your body parts for play will send the wrong message and may encourage rough play.
- Physical punishment can create aggression which will make the situation worse.
- Providing your cat with the right kind of environment and plenty of opportunities to play appropriately will help prevent play aggression.