

Mischievous Cat? He Just Might Be Bored

Mr. Whiskers has done it again: He's knocked over the potted plants, batted belongings off the dresser and chased people around the house.

Cats like Mr. Whiskers aren't just rebellious. Sometimes, they're just bored.

Signs of Boredom

Those who share their home with a cat might be under the impression that their companion lolls about the house all day, doing nothing at all. On the contrary, cats—for the most part—are more inclined to spend their days playing.

If they're bored, they might meow, chase or pester, escape or engage in repetitive behavior like knocking objects off shelves. They entertain themselves and might think it's fun to be destructive, especially when that behavior attracts their person's attention.

It's important—even when the cat knocks over the plant that was just repotted—not to punish him. After ensuring he has a clean bill of health, assess his needs at home, paying close attention to his personality, which will give hints to his mental and physical needs. Younger or more social cats usually require more stimulation than older or shy cats.

Banish Boredom

Using a **toy or game** to play with a cat usually helps him release his energy. Cats have a natural prey drive and love testing their pouncing, stalking or chasing skills. Even a paper grocery type sack (handles removed) makes for a fun game of hide-and-seek.

Some cats will even fetch a ball if thrown to them, and **positive reinforcement** can be used to teach cats tricks.

Banishing kitty boredom can be as simple as setting up a bird feeder outside a window. For cats who enjoy climbing, a tall scratching post with perches could do the trick.

It can be a challenge to figure out which activity any cat likes best, but—above all—don't force him to do something he doesn't want to do. Find an activity or toy that he already enjoys. He'll be less likely to be bored and destructive if he has playtime scheduled with his favorite person.



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