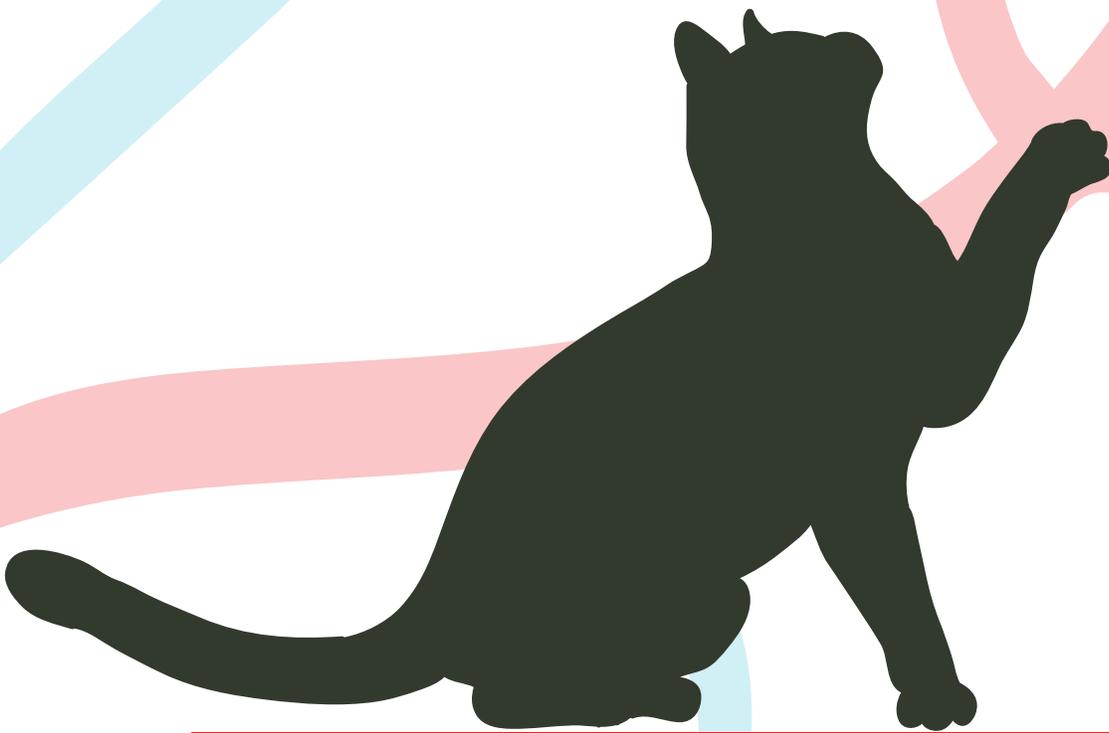


A Beginner's Guide to Training your Cat



MORRIS
ANIMAL REFUGE

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF TRAINING MY CAT?

It can bring you and your cat closer, help you understand each other better, and impress rooms full of people, so why aren't people training their cats? While cats are just as capable of mastering tricks as one of our other favorite furry companions, the dog, they're often overlooked when it comes to training. Whatever the reason is for NOT training cats, it's dimmed by the amazing benefits, to both you AND your cat.

- 🐾 Clicker training can help build your kitty's confidence
- 🐾 A clicker trained cat always impresses a crowd
- 🐾 Training leads to a better-behaved cat: that could mean no counter surfing or no running out the door!
- 🐾 Training keeps their minds from getting bored



CLICKER TRAINING BASICS

Clicker training is a positive reinforcement method of training. That means that rather than relying on punishment, which has proven to be ineffective at teaching behavior, you will REWARD your cat for their desirable behavior.

Clicker training combines both classical conditioning, think Pavlov's dogs, and operant conditioning, think about how you get a paycheck for working



Click, then immediately treat your cat. This is the classical conditioning part of clicker training. It's when your cat learns to associate a stimulus (in this case, the "click") with a response, you giving them a "treat"

Repeat this process a few times, until you're sure your cat has made the association between "click" and a treat!!

Once your cat understands the clicker means a treat is coming, you can start the operant conditioning portion of training! Click when your cat does the behavior you're looking for. Now, they'll associate that behavior with a reward. The clicker is a more precise "marker" of the behavior you're looking for. This will make it easier for your cat to figure out what is being rewarding.

Now that you know how clicker training works, you're about ready to start teaching your feline some tricks! Before you start, take a look at some vocab you should be familiar with... then get started! Best of luck!



REINFORCEMENT:

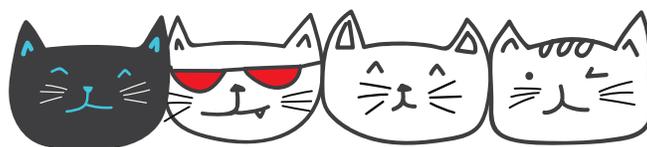
This is how you'll reward your cat after a "click" to let them know they've done a good job! For some cats, a little wet food on a spoon works. For others, commercial cat treats might be the key! After every click, make sure you're rewarding your cats with a reinforcer they loooove!

CUE:

This is the phrase, and sometimes accompanied hand motion, that you'll associate with the trick after your cat has learned it. In the future, when you say "sit" and point at the ground, your cat will know what you're talking about!

METHOD:

We have three methods off training with our clickers, capturing (clicking when your cat naturally does the behavior you're looking for. It is only possible to capture behaviors that the animal naturally does, so while you could click to reward laying down and train your cat that way, you couldn't teach your cat to shoot a basketball using capturing), luring (using a lure, like a treat, to guide them to do the behavior you desire. For instance, you could lure a cat to step over a hurdle by luring them with a treat) and shaping (when you reward getting closer and close to the final behavior to help your cat figure out what you want from them. If you want them to climb into a box, you would first click if they simply look at the box, then, if they start moving toward the box that's when you'll "click," eventually they'll only get a reward for stepping into the box.



TEACHING YOUR CAT TO RESPOND TO THEIR NAME

CUE: *Your cat's name!*

METHOD: *Capturing*

 **Break training sessions into 5-10 minute intervals to avoid boredom or**
mental exhaustion! Each step represents one interval, but each cat will
move at their own pace, so you may be able to work through to the final
behavior more quickly or it may take longer! 

Remember: every click should always be paired with a treat or they might forget the connection between the "click" and a reward, and you won't have the precise marker anymore!

- 1** Face your cat and say his name. Right when he looks at you, "click."
- 2** When you treat your cat, try throwing the treat a few feet away, making your cat turn away from you. Don't call his name again until he's just finishing his treat!
- 3** Say his name, wait for him to look at you, "Click" and treat. Make sure you're only rewarding him for looking at you after you've said his name!
- 4** Keep moving around each time, but now only reward when he makes eye contact with you after you've said his name. This means "click" immediately as he looks into your eyes!
- 5** Keep practicing until he readily responds to his name by looking at you in the eyes.

TEACHING YOUR CAT TO TARGET

CUE: *you pick! maybe "touch!"
maybe "come!"* **METHOD:** *Shaping + Capturing*

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mental exhaustion! Each step represents one interval, but each cat will
move at their own pace, so you may be able to work through to the final
behavior more quickly or it may take longer! 

Teaching an animal to target means you're teaching them to tap a body part, like your fist, on command. We're going to teach our cat's to bring their noses to our hand on command!

- 1** Start with your hand an inch or two away from your cat's face. You can put your hand in a fist or simply hold one or two fingers up. "Click" when your cat looks at your hand.
- 2** Now, you will "click" when her nose touches your hand. Repeat until she has mastered this.
- 3** Move your hand another 2 inches away from her face and "click" when her nose touches your hand.
- 4** Start to introduce your cue. Saying "touch," and then raising your hand. As before, "click" once she touches your hand with her nose.
- 5** Continue moving your hand back in 2 inch increments until you reach your desired distance.

TEACHING YOUR CAT TO SPIN

CUE: *Spin!*

METHOD: *Shaping and Luring!*



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- 1** Start with your cat standing. With your finger close enough to their nose to keep interest piqued, move your finger clockwise, going from their nose toward their right ear (your left). When your cat turns its head to follow your finger, "click" and treat.
- 2** Once they've mastered 1/4 of the circle, start moving your finger from the tip of their nose to the back of their head, 1/2 of the circle. "Click" and treat once your finger stops, if they've followed it.
- 3** Now, you'll only "click" and treat when they successfully follow your finger from in front of their nose all the way around to their left ear, completing 3/4 of the circle.
- 4** Move your finger around the cat in a full circle, and "click" when their nose is back in its starting place!
- 5** Once they have mastered the full spin motion, keep practicing and introduce the cue "spin."
- 6** Now you can begin phasing out the lure, an easy way to do this is to raise your hand farther above their head. Keep using the cue each time. Eventually, they'll be able to spin without a lure!

TEACHING YOUR CAT TO HIGH-FIVE

CUE: *High-five!*

METHOD: *All three are involved!*

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mental exhaustion! Each step represents one interval, but each cat will
move at their own pace, so you may be able to work through to the final
behavior more quickly or it may take longer! 

- 1** Holding a treat, raise your hand slightly in front of and above the cat's head. You should tuck the treat under your thumb so your hand is open for a high five. When they look at your raised hand, click.
- 2** With a treat tucked under your thumb, click any time the cat lifts their paw off the ground.
- 3** Next, click when the cat extends their paw toward your open hand.
- 4** Click as the paw makes contact with your hand.
- 5** Raise your hand with no treat in it and click when the cat's paw makes contact with your hand.
- 6** Work on adding the cue "high five" as you raise your hand, and continue to click any time they successfully touch their paw to your hand
- 7** Continue working on getting a quick response to the cue "high five" when you raise your hand over a few training sessions

TEACHING YOUR CAT TO SIT ON COMMAND

CUE: *Sit*

METHOD: *Luring*

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mental exhaustion! Each step represents one interval, but each cat will
move at their own pace, so you may be able to work through to the final
behavior more quickly or it may take longer! 

1 Get your cat's attention with a treat in your hand. Make sure the cat is interested enough to follow the lure in your hand by watching to see if they move their head to follow their treat.

2 Raise the treat above the cat's head and then move it back towards their ears. As they follow the treat in your hand, they will naturally sit. Click at the same moment their butt touches the ground. Repeat until the cat has mastered the motion.

3 Introduce the cue "sit" with your hand above their cat's head, but this time do not move your hand back toward their ears. Click once they go into the sitting position.

4 Now, without the treat in hand to lure them, work on adding in a "point" downward as you say "sit" and fading out the lure. Click when they sit.

5 Over the next few training sessions, keep working to get the cat to sit with no treat as a lure, only your hand signal and the cue!



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