

Garston Animal Rescue

House Cats

Sometimes people are forced to keep their cats in – perhaps because they live on a busy road, or because there are other local hazards. Try some of these ideas to provide stimulus and fun for your cat.

Cardboard boxes cost nothing. Up-end box and cut out a doorway – it becomes a secret den! Or simply leave open and it becomes a cosy sleeping place.

Scratching posts and Climbing Frames – if you make your own it's so much cheaper than bought ones. Use wood, off-cuts of carpet and rope.



Catnip – most cats love it though a few will ignore it.

Sheets of newspaper made into a tunnel – always good fun – costs nothing.

Get a kitchen roll or toilet roll just for your house cat to trash – better this than trashing your house.

Discarded gift wrappings and bows. Silver paper from sweets and wrappers from chocolates.

Ball of wool – lots of fun and chaos!

Acorns, twigs even the odd log from the park, try a few feathers, lost golf balls – these are always appreciated, basically anything from outdoors because they smell so much more interesting than plastic toys from a pet shop.

Grow grass in a pot, or simply bring in some grass from the park (not from where it's just been sprayed with weed killer – you don't want to kill your cat).

A shelf just for your cat - to jump on, chill and survey the world!

See if a carpet shop will give you unwanted cardboard rolls which held carpets or lino, and make into exciting tunnels.

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Cover a tea chest and let your cat scratch this – the cover is to protect your legs from the rough wood.

A washing-up bowl of water with floating things like ping pong balls bobbing up and down! Definitely fun, but just don't kick over the water.

Try some of the wand-type toys – good for bonding with your cat or encouraging a shy cat to play with you from a safe distance.

Change the toys from time to time. Become a magpie - learn to acquire absolutely anything that you think may entertain your cat/s.

Outside

We sometimes suggest that people make their garden or yard escape-proof. This is so your cat/s still has freedom and can go out in your garden/yard to enjoy the sun and fresh air, and yet is not exposed to the dangers outside. You can either make it yourself or get a builder to do it for you.

Try this:

Attach brackets round the top of your wall. Secure an overhead mesh ceiling – fairly robust is best – from wall to wall. Or you could just have the mesh jutting out by about 20" all the way round and that way your cat/s can't climb over. Using black mesh netting is effective also. Definitely advisable to have brackets at an angle upwards so they don't poke you in the eye.

Lots of ideas on the internet – google 'making your garden cat escape proof' or go on International Cat Care site at www.icatcare.org

For a professional installation visit www.secur-a-cat.com

Important - You do need to check your fencing/netting regularly to make sure it is still secure and not damaged.

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Why not try some of these ideas outside?

Bring a log from the park for your yard – let your cat scratch the log – more interesting for your cat/s and less wear on your furniture.

Grow some nice containers of shrubs. Grow your own catmint – called Nepeta in garden centers. Grow a pot of grass from seed.

Grow a small Butterfly Bush (Buddleia) in a container – attracts butterflies and makes everywhere smell gorgeous.

Consider having a small kennel as a den where your cat/s can hide and feel safe.

And what about a child's sandpit? Consider getting a sandpit from a toyshop – cheap and lots of fun for your cat – but beware – he/she may use it as a toilet.

Read Erica Peachey's book 'Have Fun With Your Cat' available from vets such as Alder Vets (tel 0151 220 4668).

Go to www.ericapeachey.co.uk

A nice bench to sit out there yourself – go on, you deserve it after all this!