



UNDER-STIMULATED CATS

Not enough to do.
Nothing to look forward to.
Life gets boring.

Just like people, cats need mental challenges, physical activity, and opportunities to express natural behaviors. Without enough stimulation, cats can become bored, frustrated, and even develop problem behaviors.



WHAT IS AN UNDER-STIMULATED CAT?

An under-stimulated cat isn't just "lazy" or "chill." Their environment isn't providing enough sensory, mental, physical, or emotional input to keep them engaged and satisfied.

This can lead to boredom, frustration, and a search for stimulation—often in ways we don't like.



A bored cat will make their own entertainment.
And we may not enjoy what they choose!

COMMON CAUSES

- Lack of mental stimulation (no problem solving or enrichment)
- Not enough simulated hunting sequences
- Too little play or physical activity
- Unpredictable or unchanging routines
- Indoor confinement with limited viewing, climbing, or exploration
- Resources that don't meet the cat's needs
- Not enough social interaction (if the cat enjoys it)

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

- Excessive sleeping (cat has nothing better to do)
- Zoomies or bursts of wild energy (often at night)
- Attention-seeking behaviors (meowing, following you, tapping, getting into your face)
- Destructive behaviors (scratching furniture, chewing cords, knocking things over)
- Overgrooming or licking to the point of hair loss
- Weight gain and lethargy
- Seeming "shut down" or withdrawn



UNDER-STIMULATION vs. SHUT DOWN – KNOW THE DIFFERENCE

UNDER-STIMULATED

The cat is **BORED** and **LOOKING** for something to do. They may be restless, vocal, or mischievous.

- Actively seeking interaction or entertainment
- Often energetic or persistent
- Behavior improves with enrichment and activity



They can look similar, but the reasons are very different!

SHUT DOWN

The cat is **OVERWHELMED**, **FEARFUL**, or doesn't feel safe. They withdraw to cope.

- Hiding, not coming out
- No interest in play or food
- Flat affect, low energy
- Needs help with stress, fear, or medical issues



If your cat suddenly becomes quiet or hides, consider stress, pain, or illness first.
If your cat is active but creating chaos, they may be bored and under-stimulated.

HOW TO FIX IT: CREATE A RICHER, MORE ENGAGING LIFE



1. PROVIDE MENTAL STIMULATION



- Food puzzles & treat dispensers
- Training sessions
- Clicker training or tricks
- Rotating toys & environments
- Hide-and-seek treats
- New scents & textures
- Change things up regularly!



2. OFFER PROBLEM SOLVING CHALLENGES



- Puzzle feeders & foraging toys
- DIY toys (boxes, paper bags, towel rolls, egg cartons)
- Scatter feeding
- Hide treats around the home
- Challenges should be doable but make them think!



3. PROVIDE SIMULATED HUNTING SEQUENCES



- 3–5 short play sessions daily
- Follow the hunt cycle: STALK → CHASE → CATCH → KILL → EAT → GROOM → SLEEP
- End play with a "catch" (let them capture the toy)
- Follow with a meal or treat
- This satisfies natural instincts and promotes better sleep!



4. CREATE AN ENGAGING ENVIRONMENT



- Cat trees, shelves, and perches
- Window views and bird feeders
- Safe outdoor access (catio or harness walks)
- Vertical space is essential
- Rotate environments and toys



5. ESTABLISH ROUTINE WITH VARIATION



- Predictable routines give security
- Add variety within routine
- Mix up toys, locations, and activities
- Avoid long periods with nothing happening

IF YOU IGNORE UNDER-STIMULATION...

Boredom can lead to:

- Destructive behaviors
- Excessive vocalization
- Weight gain and health issues
- Frustration and aggression
- A lower quality of life for your cat—and for you



QUICK CHECKLIST: IS YOUR CAT UNDER-STIMULATED?

- ☒ Do they have multiple play sessions each day?
- ☒ Do they get mental challenges or problem-solving opportunities?
- ☒ Do they get to express their hunting instincts?
- ☒ Do they have access to climbing, perching, and exploring?
- ☒ Do they have variety in their day?
- ☒ If you checked "no" to any, it's time to enrich their life!



THE BOTTOM LINE

A stimulated cat is a happier, healthier cat.

Give them things to do, think about, climb on, chase, and discover—and watch their natural joy shine!



Enrichment isn't a luxury—it's a necessity.
An enriched cat is a cat that thrives.

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