

CAT ENRICHMENT CHECKLIST

The Seven CATegories of Enrichment:

1. Physical Enrichment:

provides certainty, consistency and predictability

- Routine** - Things happen on a schedule
- Quiet places to rest**
- Lots of Sleeping Options** - they naturally move around as a means of parasite control
- High perching options**
- Space** - enough to allow for each cat to keep a social distance of about 3 to 9 feet when they share a room
- Multiple everything**

Ideally you'd set up a sanctuary room for each cat who has access by wearing a door-activating collar.

3. Elimination:

provides a sense of safety and security

- Large boxes** - 1.5X length of cat
- Open boxes** - covered traps odors and prevents cats from having safe vantage point
- One more litter box than number of cats**
- Spread out** - throughout the home
- Unscented, sandy textured litter**
- Scoop daily +**
- Replace litter, clean box** - every 4-6 wks

5. Behavioral Enrichment:

expressing natural/inherited behaviors

- Scratching and Clawing** - relieves stress
- Scenting** - corner combs
- Chewing** - moistened natural chews, dried fish/beef //poultry
- Climbing** - to high spaces
- Prey Play** - Two, 10-minute sessions/day mimics the natural predatory hunting sequence
- Stalking** - bird feeders at windows with a perch or can help their mental health enormously
- Catios**
- Hide and Seek** - stalk and chase where you are the prey

7. Mental:

provides cognitive stimulation

Cats need challenges and problem solving. Lack of mental stimulation = boredom. Captivity lacks the complex challenges and stimulus they would normally encounter in the wild.

- Treat Puzzles** - complex challenges - start with ball, then fishbowl, then sliders and more challenging puzzles
- Treat Toss** - toss out of sight for simulating hunting and foraging
- Clicker Training** - provides sense of control
- Maze** - cardboard boxes with treats and toys inside
- Change/refresh toys frequently**
- Walks** - satisfies curiosity

2. Nutritional Enrichment:

plays a big role in how your cat feels

- No junk food**
- Species appropriate diet** - for an obligate carnivore
- Feed frequently** - 4-5 times/day
- Small portions**
- Hunting & foraging opportunities** - food/treat puzzles
- No family meals** - feed in separate bowls placed out of sight of each other
- Quiet location** - away from appliances and noisy equipment

4. Social Enrichment:

pertains to all beings that share the home space

- Allowed contact with non-prey species** - enhances the cat's perception of control
- Respect Boundaries** - Some cats like to be pet and groomed and others prefer no touch with distance prey play
- Understand cats lack conflict resolution skills** - they may try to avoid antagonistic encounters by avoiding the other cats or decreasing activity
- Separate Resources**

6. Sensory:

encourages exploration and play

- Catnip**
- Silvervine**
- Grasses**
- Scent in paper bag/toy/boxes**
- Nature Sounds** - or icalm
- Cat TV**
- Herbs and Spices** - dill, olives, oregano, parsley, rosemary

Your cat needs all 45 items on this list; it's not a pick-and-choose system. If we replicate in the home, what the cat's instinctive behaviors would be in a natural setting, we greatly reduce stress and the possibility of behavior issues and disease.

You can watch the webinar here:
<https://youtu.be/qheNAHLhokY>