

Catification: Creating a Home That Both You and Your Cat Will Love

By Kate Benjamin

For indoor cats, your house is their domain. In order to help them live a happy and fulfilling life, it's up to you to provide them with a stimulating environment that caters to their natural instincts. But don't worry; you can do it without looking like a crazy cat person! I'm going to walk you through the basics of environmental enrichment for cats, showing you what you need to do while keeping your sense of style in mind.

Time to Climb!

That little lion residing in your home has a basic instinct to climb, as you may have noticed when you watched Fluffy scale your living room curtains. This is because in nature cats are both predator and prey, so being up high helps them survey their environment, allowing them to keep an eye out for threats and for a snack that might be passing by.

In your home, you will need to create a place for your cat to climb that you both agree on. You can start by clearing off some shelves or the top of a bookcase and creating a way for your cat to easily access those areas. You don't have to spend a lot of money, simply start by rearranging some furniture and working with what you've got.

Safety First

Make sure to plan your climbing shelves so they are easy and safe for your



cat to use. Avoid large gaps between the shelves, 9 to 12 inches is a good distance. It's also important to add a non-slip surface to the top of the shelves to prevent your cat from slipping. I like to use carpet tiles, sisal rug remnants or even cutup yoga mats. You can secure them to the top of the shelf with double-sided tape.





Create a Destination

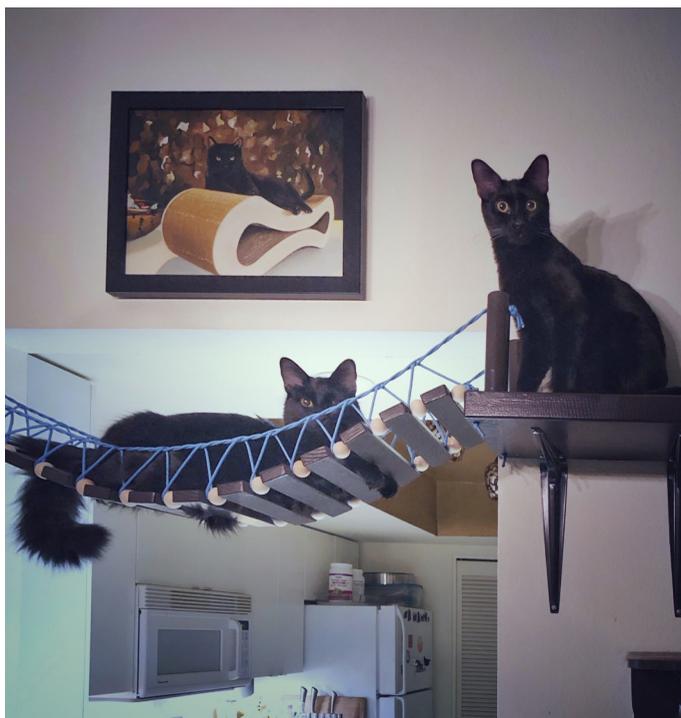
Think about adding an interesting element to your cat climbing area by creating a destination. Perhaps your shelves lead to a large sunny window that's perfect for sunbathing or bird watching. Another option is to add a cozy bed up high on a shelf. This will entice kitty to use the new shelves that you worked so hard to design!

Choosing a Location

Keep in mind that cats enjoy spending time near you, so plan your new climbing area in a place where you spend time. Add some shelves or perches over your desk or next to your favorite chair. Your cat will appreciate having a place of her own where she can watch you from above.

DIY

If you're the DIY type, you might want to install custom climbing shelves for your cat. If not, there are plenty of pre-made shelves that are designed specifically for cats with added features like soft beds, toys and scratching surfaces. The important thing is that both you and your cat are happy with your choices. Kitty has to enjoy using it and you have to enjoy looking at it. Since you share your home with your feline friends, it's important that everyone is satisfied.



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