

Why Clicker Train Your Cat?

Clicker training helps your cat feel more in control in her environment. This type of training offers her a [choice](#) – and choice is very powerful when it comes to a cat feeling in control versus backed in a corner. When your cat feels more in control in her environment she'll relax more and be less inclined to exhibit negative behaviors. She'll also realize that offering desirable behavior gets her a reward but an undesirable behavior offers nothing. Cats are very smart so they quickly figure out that desirable behavior is more beneficial.

Clicker training offers you an effective communication tool to use with your cat. You can click and reward for subtle behaviors you normally wouldn't be able to acknowledge.

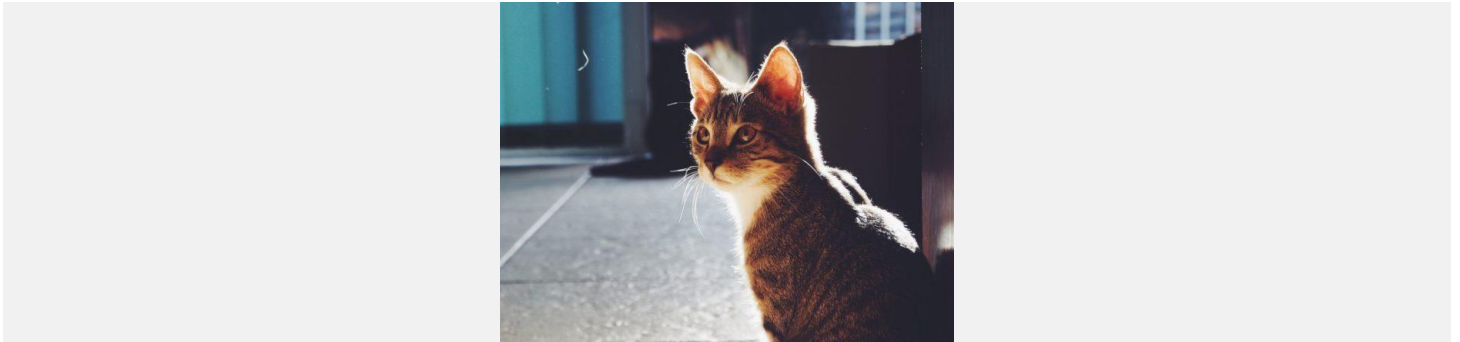


Photo: Pexels

The Clicker

You'll need a clicker. This is a small device that makes a cricket-type sound. The reason we use a clicker is that it's a unique sound in the environment so kitty will know when she hears it, she has done something desirable. The clicker is used to "mark" the [behavior](#) you want from your cat when it's displayed. The clicker communicates to the cat that a very specific behavior is desirable. Since most cats are very food-motivated you will immediately follow a click with a food reward. The cat learns the sound of the click means a reward will follow.

Clickers are available at your local pet product store as well as online. For [timid](#) cats who might be afraid of the clicker sound you can use the click of a ballpoint pen.

Why do you need to use a clicker and not just merely toss a treat? Because the clicker is more immediate. You want the cat to know the behavior she displayed at that very nanosecond was exactly what you wanted. You can click faster than you can toss the treat.



Getting Started Clicker Training Your Cat

You first must teach the cat to associate the sound of the clicker with the food reward. This is what gives the clicker its value. Break up pieces of treats or use a supply of dry kibble. Click the clicker and then toss a treat. If you feed your cat wet food you can place a small amount on a chopstick or on a soft baby spoon. Once you've clicked and then offered the food, wait for the cat to look at you before repeating the sequence. This helps your cat associate

you as the supplier of the reward. Repeat the process about 10 times or however long the cat remains interested and engaged.

The first few sessions shouldn't be very long. If your cat isn't interested it might be because she isn't hungry enough or the food reward choice isn't motivating enough.

Rewarding Your Cat's Good Behavior

You can start by teaching your cat a behavior such as "sit." Get on the floor in front of your cat. Hold a treat or a small amount of wet food on a spoon just slightly up and over her head. As she looks at the treat her hind quarters will probably naturally go into a sit. Don't hold the treat too high or she'll simply stand on her hind feet to reach up for it. As soon as she sits, click and reward. Repeat this exercise multiple times. Once she has the behavior down you can then put it on cue by saying "sit." Soon you can phase out the food lure because she'll know to respond to the verbal cue alone.

Once a behavior is learned and performed consistently you can start to offer intermittent food rewards and won't have to constantly have a supply of food or treats with you. Always reward good behavior though – whether it's praise, food or petting.

HERE ARE SOME HELPFUL TIPS TO GET YOU STARTED!

- The sequence is: behavior (that you like) --CLICK--reach for treat--deliver treat
- Don't CLICK before the behavior happens or point the clicker at your cat.
- Remember the clicker is not a remote control or a cue for your cat to do something!
- Keep your treat hand still until after the click.
- Keep the treats in a treat bag, pocket, or carpenters apron, not in your hand -- we want the cat to focus on the behavior not the food.
- The location of the treat delivery should be planned before starting the session.
- Always follow the click with a treat. One click=One treat.
- If you make a mistake and click, the cat still gets the treat!
- If your cat makes a mistake (offers a behavior you are not seeking) simply don't click and wait for your cat to try again. We want to encourage your cat to be an active learner and thinker!
- The absence of the click gives the cat a message to try again.

What is the point of training?

- Enrichment—mental and physical stimulation
- Improving communication cat to human
- Building positive bonds with humans
- Teach desirable behaviors—using a scratching post, going to a place or station, moving your cat place to place without your hands.
- Response substitution: If you Reinforce incompatible behaviors such as your cat. Your cat cannot scratch your leg if she's using his scratching post.

We recommend you work with a Cat Clicker Trainer to learn the technique. It is easy to do, but easy to do wrong, so working with a trainer is very important. Cat clicker trainers are rare and hard to find, but we can refer you to excellent trainers who can help you with cat clicker training and so much more!! Just ask!