

# BEHAVIOR Training

Kentucky Humane Society

## CLICKER TRAINING YOUR CAT

Having a cat that knows basic manners such as sit, down, and to come when called can make for a much happier life for you and your cat. Cats respond well to the same type of positive reinforcement that has been used with dog training for years. One of the best ways to train your cat positively is through clicker training. You can teach your cat anything from basic manners so he stops jumping on the counter to cool party tricks like “roll over”. To get started with clicker training your cat, here is what you will need:

- A clicker. Can be bought in most pet stores.
- A cat. Can't train a cat without one.
- A reward. The best reward is whatever your cat likes best. It could be a small treat, a lick of a can of wet food, a few seconds of play with a favorite toy or your attention. Try out different things and see what makes your cat happiest and keeps his attention the longest.

Once you have all the needed supplies you need to teach the cat that the clicker means they will get a reward. To do this, click the clicker and give a treat. Click, treat. Click, treat. And repeat. After this has been done a handful of times, wait for your cat to not be paying attention to you, and click. If he looks at you for his treat, that means the clicker is “charged” or every time he hears the click, he will get a treat.

- Begin with something that your cat is likely to do on his own (sit, come, touch your hand with his paw or nose). You can wait for your cat to sit on his own, or you can “lure” him into the behavior. To lure a sit, take your hand with a treat in it and place it in front of your cat's nose. Slowly move the treat backwards over his head towards his tail. His head should follow the treat and as his head goes back, his butt will go down. As the cat is performing the behavior, click and give a treat. Only click once per behavior; Multiple clicks can confuse your cat. Don't name the behavior yet, your cat doesn't know what you are saying.
- Repeat the sequence until your cat is eating the treat then performing the behavior again immediately. That is when you can start to name the behavior.
- Keep your cats training sessions very short. Cats have short attention spans, and will probably let you know when they are done training, by walking away.

- Never force your cat to perform a movement. Wait for him to offer it on his own. You can start by rewarding for small movements toward your goal, and then shape a behavior by raising the goal. For example, if you're training your cat to shake paws, click any movement of his paw, and then start clicking only the raising of his paw, then raising and offering his paw etc.

Clicker training your cat can be a fun experience for all. Your cat will be better behaved, your friends and family will be impressed your cat listens, comes when called, sits, etc. and most importantly, you will deepen the bond between you and your cat.

If you need additional advice, please contact the Kentucky Humane Society's free pet HELP line at **(502) 509-4PET (4738)** to discuss your cat's behavior issues with a trained volunteer.

