VOKRA
VANCOUVER ORPHAN KITTEN RESCUE ASSOCIATION

Understanding Why Your Cat Is Active at Night

It's common for cats to wake their owners by meowing, scratching at doors, or knocking things over while everyone is asleep.

Why Cats Are Nocturnal (or Seem to Be)

- **Natural instincts:** Cats are crepuscular—most active at dawn and dusk. Outdoor or former stray cats may hunt at night because their prey is more active then.
- **Youthful energy:** Kittens and young cats have bursts of energy at all hours.
- **Fear or shyness:** A nervous cat might hide during the day and explore at night when it feels safer.
- **Human influence:** If you mainly interact with your cat in the evening, your cat may shift its schedule to match your attention.

What You Can Do

- **Rule out health issues:** If nighttime activity is new or sudden, schedule a vet check.
- **Increase evening play:** Tire your cat out with interactive play before bedtime.
- **Create daytime stimulation:**
    - Offer battery-operated or motion toys.
    - Add a window perch or place a bird feeder outside for "cat TV."
    - Use puzzle feeders or hide kibble/treats around the house.
- **Try clicker training:** Positive-reinforcement training provides mental exercise and builds confidence.
- **Ignore the behavior:** Use earplugs if needed—any response can reward the behavior.
- **Set bedroom boundaries:** Keep the door closed and give your cat a warm bed elsewhere.
- **Consider safe aversives:** (e.g., scents or textures your cat dislikes) to discourage scratching at the door.

What Not to Do

- **Don’t punish or yell:** It can increase fear or even aggression.
- **Don’t get up to feed, pet, or let your cat out:** Any interaction teaches your cat that nighttime antics work.

Tip: Consistency is key—when everyone in the household follows the same plan, most cats adjust their schedules over time.