Cat Toys and How to Use Them

Safe Toys

When choosing toys for your cat, safety should always come first. The right toy depends on your cat's **size, energy level, play style, and environment**. While no toy can be guaranteed completely safe, these guidelines will help you minimize risks:

- **Avoid household hazards:** Cats are often drawn to string, yarn, ribbons, rubber bands, milk jug rings, paper clips, pins, or needles. These can cause serious injury if swallowed.
- **Modify unsafe toys:** Remove small parts like ribbons, feathers, strings, or plastic eyes that could be chewed off.
- **Choose washable toys:** Soft toys should be machine-washable. Look for child-safe labeling (safe for children under 3 years old) and avoid fillings like nutshells or polystyrene beads.
- **Skip rigid toys:** Most cats prefer toys they can bat, bite, or kick over hard, inflexible ones.

Toys We Recommend

Active Toys

- **Plastic shower curtain rings** – fun to bat, carry, or link together and hang.
- **Plastic balls (with or without bells)** – great for rolling games.
- **Ping-Pong or practice golf balls** – try in a dry bathtub for endless fun.
- **Paper bags (handles removed)** – perfect for hiding, pouncing, or distracting your cat. *Never use plastic bags.*
- **Sisal-wrapped toys** – excellent for cats who don't show interest in softer toys.
- **Cardboard rolls (from toilet paper or paper towels)** – cats love batting and unraveling them.

Catnip Toys

- **Catnip-stuffed toys** – ideal for kicking, carrying, or rubbing.
- **Loose catnip** – sprinkle on a towel or mat for easy cleanup.
- **Catnip spray** – a tidy alternative to leaves.

- **Note:** Not all cats respond to catnip. Some may get over-excited, others relaxed. It's safe and not addictive.

Comfort Toys

- **Small stuffed animals** – easy to carry for some cats.
- **Larger stuffed animals** – for cats that like to "hunt" and wrestle. Toys with legs or tails are especially popular.
- **Cardboard boxes** – especially ones that are just slightly too small, make excellent hideouts.

Tips for Getting the Most Out of Toys

- **Rotate regularly:** Keep only 4–5 toys out at a time, and swap them daily or weekly to keep play fresh.
- **Keep favorites available:** If your cat has a beloved toy (like a soft "baby"), always leave it out.
- **Offer variety:** Aim for one toy to carry, one to wrestle, one to roll, and one to cuddle.
- **Play hide-and-seek:** Hide toys around the house "discovered" toys are more exciting than those handed directly to your cat.