



Cat Adopter Tips: Aggressive Play

Have a cat who is really rough with play? Do they latch onto your arm and bite and kick you? Do they tackle your ankles every day when you get home? Are they chasing and cornering your other cat without heeding their hisses and growls?

As bad as this may sound, don't give up yet! Cats who have strong prey drives and/or who play really rough can improve with the right help. Here are some tips to try when working with a cat who is showing aggression to people or other pets.

Vet checkup

First, schedule an appointment with your vet to make sure there's nothing going on with your cat's health. You can't assume the problem is all behavioral until you rule out any medical possibilities. This is especially true if you've had your cat for a while, but the aggression is new. If your kitty is in pain, they may be lashing out in frustration or fear.

Play, play, play

See our Feline Playtime tips for starters. Especially focus on wand toys and food puzzles.

Some specific brand recommendations:

Flying Frenzy or Da Bird wand toys (make sure to get multiple attachments so you can switch them out to keep them interesting!)

Kong Cat Roller treat dispenser

NoBowl feeding system

Cat's Meow motorized wand (automatic toy that can entertain your cat while you are busy)

Are toys not enough?

All cats love a good show. Make the environment more stimulating by adding a bird feeder near an accessible window.

Anxious and defensive cats may be lashing out more from fear than from a need to hunt. Feliway or other pheromone diffusers can calm them down and make them feel more secure.

Very intelligent cats can figure out that you're controlling the wand toy and get bored more quickly. Train that smarty-cat with a clicker and treats to work their brain! They can learn fun tricks like "spin" and "high five." Check out Jackson Galaxy's Cat Pawsitive program for more info.

Food-motivated cats can be fed wet food mixed with water for at least one meal a day. Some cats find wet food more satisfying than dry kibble, and the added water makes them feel more full without adding calories.

Sometimes, a cat just needs the whole-world stimulation of a trip outside. Read our Great Outdoors tips for keeping them safe!