

# Teaching Cues to Your Cat

## Quick & Easy Training Tips

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**L**ike dogs, cats can be taught simple tricks and cues. *Come, sit up* and *lie down* are a few of the common cues, along with *high five* and *fetch*. So roll over, Fido—here comes Puff!

Are cats getting smarter? Perhaps. Or we simply may be paying more attention to our feline friends.

Like humans, cats have individual personalities, and some may be more eager than others to learn. But, don't pre-judge. If your cat is food motivated, he may be a good-natured and enthusiastic participant.

Patience and consistency are key to suc-

cess. A quiet room that is free of distractions will allow kitty to focus on you. Keep the training sessions short, no more than 10 to 15 minutes at a time. Commands and hand signals should remain the same throughout the training, and each session should end on a positive note, before kitty gets tired or bored.

Select a favorite food or treat to motivate your cat, and plan your training sessions prior to his or her regular feeding schedule. A hungry cat will make an attentive student, but don't allow your cat to get too hungry or he may become irritable, with just cause! Simple praise and loving affection also are good motivators, but in the beginning, food is often a better ally. If a moist daily food does the trick,

use it instead of a treat to promote a balanced diet. However, a limited number of treats may be a good alternative when you're doing midday or evening training sessions.

For your first cue, select a task that may be useful, such as *come*. This is an easy cue to teach, and yes—cats can come when they are called! Say your cat's name, and add the word *come*. If that doesn't get kitty's attention, shake the treat bag or tap the food bowl on the floor. When kitty arrives, reward him with a morsel of food and generous

*At left, with treat rewards and lots of praise, cats and kittens can rival dogs for the tasks and tricks that they can perform. Photo of Shelby, available for adoption at Cat Depot, by Marilyn Warner*



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amounts of praise and petting. Move to another location and repeat the exercise. This can be done one to five times before feeding. Judge the length of the session by your kitty's mood. You want to make each session fun and end with words of praise and loving affection. Train consistently every day for a week or more and in no time at all, kitty will come when he is called.

*Sit up* can be taught using the same method. A favorite toy or piece of food dangled above kitty's head will grab his attention. Once the cat is in the correct upright position, say *sit up*, and give praise and a reward. Be patient and reward only when he is settled into a sitting position. Again, make the exercise fun and consistent, and follow kitty's lead on how long the session should last.

To teach your cat how to *shake hands* or do a *high five*, touch kitty's paw and say *shake* or *high five*. When your cat lifts his paw, shake it or pat it and give verbal praise, a treat and loving hugs and pats. Eventually, your cat will follow cues simply for the sake of praise and love. And why not? You are providing positive one-on-one time with your kitty, and, as we all know, cats love feeling special. 🐾

**Cat Depot, one of the largest no-kill, non-profit feline adoption centers in the nation, is dedicated to saving lives. Open seven days a week, Cat Depot is located at 2542 17th Street in Sarasota. For more information, call 941-366-2404 or visit [www.CatDepot.org](http://www.CatDepot.org).**

