

Why are some cats annoyingly active at night?



Nighttime activity can have a medical or behavioral cause. First, have your vet rule out medical problems like hypothyroidism or elderly cognitive impairment. Otherwise, there are three main behavioral causes:

- (1) Lack of activity during the day can make a bored cat more active at night*
- (2) Presence of other cats in the neighborhood can make your cat more social, especially during breeding seasons*
- (3) Conflicts with other cats in the home can result in agitation.*

For ideas on how to reduce nighttime activity and get some sleep, read on!

Visit us online at www.friendsofpets.org

Spay/Neuter Assistance - (907) 562-2535

Adoption Hotline - (907) 561-3677

Information Center - (907) 562-2535

P.O. Box 240981
Anchorage, AK 99524-0981



NOISES IN THE NIGHT



Coping with your cat's midnight mania!



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GET BUSY

Increasing your cat's daytime activities can help to make the nights more calm. Here are some things to try:

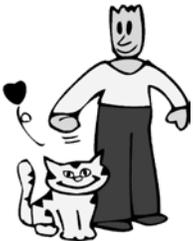


- Leave curtains open during the day. Install a bird feeder outside a window.
- Leave TV on, tuned to a nature channel, or play a "kitty video" (available from pet suppliers)
- Get a goldfish bowl or aquarium

- Rotate the toy supply to keep things interesting
- Sprinkle catnip on a scratching post
- Provide cat furniture that's great to climb and perch on, and fun to scratch
- Leave out interesting objects like an open paper bag or a cardboard box
- Stuff a Kong-style toy with food
- Make time each evening for vigorous play such as chasing, running and jumping games
- Get a companion cat...but only if YOU really want one



STICK WITH IT



While trying the ideas in this brochure, stick to your plan. Attention in any form is reinforcing to the cat. Losing your resolve and giving *occasional* attention is the surest way to continue the habit. (Think of slot machines and people!) Patience, a sense of humor, and understanding feline

behavior will help. These suggestions are usually only necessary until a cat matures.

STOP THAT!

Don't use your voice to interrupt problem behaviors. Speaking or even yelling at the cat can be interpreted as positive attention. Things to try instead:

- Squirt gun or spray bottle
- Canister of compressed air (the kind used for dusting computers and camera lenses)
- Hiss at the cat



DID YOU KNOW

While we think of cats as creatures of the night, their behavior is not truly nocturnal. Cats are *crepuscular*, which means that their activity levels naturally peak at both dawn and dusk.

Need more ideas?

We recommend *51 Ways to Entertain Your Housecat While You're Out* by Stephanie Laland

WE CAN HELP!

Call us for extra problem-solving or to share your own good ideas.

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DAYTIME ROUTINE

How to start adjusting your cat's schedule

Wake-up calls: Get up with the cat the first day, 5 minutes later the next day, 10 minutes later the next day, etc. (in longer increments if you can) until the cat regularly gets up with you.

Feeding: Don't feed kitty the minute you get up in the morning. Wait until just before you leave for the day. Split the evening meal, giving half at dinner time and half before you go to bed. Or make an automatic feeder available at night if the cat is not overweight.

BEDTIME ROUTINE

How to manage in the meantime

Ignore the cat: Don't give the cat any attention when it is bothering you in bed—no petting, no feeding, no shouting.

Muffle the sounds: Play music, put a pillow over your head, create background sound with a fan or a "white noise" machine, wear earplugs or headphones,

A room of its own: If you put the cat in another room at night, they will respond better to see-through barriers (like 2 toddler gates stacked in a doorway, or a screen door) than to a solid door. Stop door-scratching with a piece of plastic carpet runner upside down (pointy side up) in front of door, or attach acrylic plastic to lower part of door to protect it. Make sure the cat has food, water, and litterbox. Include comforts like a worn piece of your clothing, a tape recording of your voice, a heating pad made for pets, or a warmed microwave-style heating bag.