

Teach Your Cat (or Foster Feline) to High-Five (and more!)

As schools and entertainment venues close and many workplaces have employees working remotely, people all across the nation have found themselves spending just about all of their time at home.

What better time to explore new ways to bond with your cat? These simple training steps from [The Jackson Galaxy Project's Cat Pawsitive Program](#)

can help you build a deeper connection with your cat while doing something cool to keep boredom at bay.

Don't have your own cat? How about becoming a foster parent to a cat from your local shelter? Animal shelters are really in need of your support at this critical time, and fostering a cat even for a short while makes a huge difference.



BEFORE YOU START

Training should always be a fun and exciting interaction between you and your cat. Before you even start training, part of the fun for *you* that creates excitement for your *cat* will be finding a "special something" that your cat really loves.

In the training world, that special something is called a "reinforcer." It's similar to a reward in that it is something your cat really likes and will work for. Reinforcers fall into three categories:

- Food, such as treats, canned cat food, deli meats
- Toys, such as fuzzy mice, balls, wand toys, etc.
- Interactions, such as petting, brushing, or talking

Pick the one that your cat likes best! This will be the "reward" for learning and performing a behavior, in this case a high-five.

CHOOSING A TRAINING MARKER

A "training marker" is a sound the cat hears immediately after successfully completing a desired behavior. In The Jackson Galaxy Project's Cat Pawsitive program, we use

special devices called "quiet clickers" to make the sound. The clicker's sound, when immediately followed by a reinforcer, means they got it right!

If you don't have a quiet clicker, you can replace the "click" with a clicking sound you make with your tongue, or you can use the quiet clicking sound of a click-top pen. You can also use your voice by saying "Yes!" in an excited, encouraging tone.



TRAINING YOUR CAT TO

"HIGH-FIVE"

Cats often use their paws to touch items in front of them. This is what makes the high-five so easy to teach for most cats. It's best to do training at a time of day when your cat is likely to be active and expecting to spend time with you. Meal time or play time is the perfect training time! When you are ready to start training, have your cat's favorite reinforcer nearby.

Step One - With a flat hand, show your cat your palm (your side of the high five) by placing your palm in front of and just above your cat's head. This will encourage your cat to reach toward you. Make sure it isn't too far from your hand.



Step Two - Wait for your cat to touch your palm with their paw. This may require some patience!

Step Three - As soon as you feel your cat touch your palm with their paw, *immediately* click your clicker. Then immediately give your cat the chosen reinforcer (a small piece of food, a few seconds of play with a toy, or a few gentle pets).

Step Four - Remove your hand. After waiting a few seconds, repeat steps 1-3 about 10 times.

Step Five - When you are confident that your cat will place their paw on your palm, you can say, "High-Five" when you are showing your cat your palm. Remember to click or say, "Yes!" and provide the reinforcer as soon as they successfully complete the high-five!



Step Six - Get your camera out - or even better, have someone else snap a picture or video of you and your cat high-fiving. *And share your cat's new talent with the world online!* Post on social media with the hashtags [#CatPawsitive](#) and [#QuarantineCats](#). We'll select our favorites to feature



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CHALLENGE MODE: MASTERING THE LURING METHOD

Is your cat a pro at the high-five? Ready to kick your clicker training up a notch? Great!

We have a couple of other fun moves you can work on with your cats. We're entering some advanced training territory... are you up for the challenge?! **We bet you are. Let's go!**

Teaching Your Cat to "Sit" on Cue or "Jump Through a Hula Hoop/Over an Object" on Cue

When you were working on the high-five, you were using a training method called "Targeting." To teach your cat to sit on cue or to jump through a hoop (or over an obstacle) on cue, you'll be using a training method called "Luring."



Luring is a method of training that uses a reinforcer as a lure for the cat to follow.

By following the lure (food, treats, or toys), your cat is encouraged to engage in a specific behavior. Once the cat completes the behavior, you click and reinforce, just like with the high-five.



We told you this was more advanced training, so we have some important information about luring for you to review before you get started on training behaviors.

The Basics of Creating a Behavior with the Luring Method

Part One - Hold the lure (ie: your cat's favorite training reinforcer) in your hand You will want to have your cat's favorite soft food on a spoon, or a favorite treat or toy in your hand. This should be something your cat really loves and will want to get to.

When your cat smells or sees the food, treat, or toy, you will move your hand to encourage (or "lure") the cat into doing the behavior you want. (Specific directions for "sit" and "jump over/through" can be found on Page 5.)

Part Two - Click then reinforce

As soon as the cat completes the behavior by following the lure/reinforcer, click then reinforce the behavior.



Part Three - Fading the lure (This is a very important step!)

Prior to putting the behavior on "cue," you will need to "fade the lure." This means that you will stop holding the lure/reinforcer in your hand, but you will still use the same hand motion to encourage/lure the cat into a behavior.

After you ask for the behavior with the lure in your hand, and the cat

successfully completes the behavior 5 times or so, you should take the lure out of your hand. At this point, you will just pretend the lure is in your hand, and use the same hand motion you used before to lure the cat into the sit or through the hoop. When the cat completes the behavior without the lure in your hand, click then reinforce!

Part Four - Putting behavior on a cue

If you've been training with the luring technique correctly, your cat probably already associates your luring hand motion with their trained action and getting a reinforcer. But you don't want to have to always physically lure the cat into the behavior.

After the cat is performing the behavior consistently, you will want to start associating a verbal cue or a visual cue with the behavior so that you can give the cue first and the cat will then perform the behavior.

Adding a cue to the luring hand motion

Let's say that you want to transition from using your luring hand motion to using a verbal cue for "sit." That is, you eventually want to be able to say the word "sit," and have your cat sit when you say that cue word.

4a: If your luring hand motion for "sit" is...

"Move your 'luring' hand from in front of your cat's face to just up over her head and back toward her ears..."

...you would start adding a cue by saying the word "sit" as you do the luring hand motion. Repeat that several times (and don't forget to always click and reinforce when she sits!).

4b: After a few of those repetitions, you would say "sit" followed immediately by the luring hand motion, with no pause in between. Click then reinforce. Repeat that several times.

4c: Then, you'd say "sit" and wait a second before doing the luring hand motion. Click then reinforce. Repeat several times.

4d: Eventually you'd build up to having a few seconds between when you say "sit" and when you do the luring hand motion.

Through this process, your cat will begin to make the association between the verbal cue of "sit" and the original luring hand motion. And she should therefore make the association between the verbal cue of "sit" and the act of sitting and being reinforced.

The goal is that you could stop doing the original luring hand motion altogether, and just say "sit" to cue her to sit. If you have created a reliable association between your verbal cue and the behavior, your cat will begin to quickly complete the behavior when you say the cue word. That is, she will sit after you say "sit."

Once your cat is responding to the new verbal cue by completing the behavior, you can eliminate the luring hand motion completely. And remember: always click and reinforce for the behavior!

If you would like to switch from your original luring hand motion to a different non-verbal cue of your choice, you would follow the same steps.

Still with us? Follow the instructions on the final page to teach your cat "Sit" and "Jump Through a Hula Hoop/Over an Object."

TRAINING YOUR CAT TO SIT

"Sit" is a behavior that is defined by the cat bending her back legs and resting her hips on the floor while her front legs remain extended.

Step One - While holding the lure, move it just above the cat's head and back toward her ears. The cat should tip her head up to follow the lure. If you are holding the lure at the right distance,

she will start to bend her back legs to follow the lure. This will result in a "sit" position.



Step Two - As soon as your cat completes the "sit" position, click then reinforce.

Step Three - Add a cue. A common verbal cue for this behavior is "sit." A common visual cue for this behavior is moving your hand (palm open and facing upward) from about the cat's chest level to above their head.



TRAINING YOUR CAT TO JUMP OVER AN OBJECT OR THROUGH A HOOP

"Jump" over an object or through a hoop is a behavior defined by the cat jumping from one side of an object (over or through) to the other side of the same object.

Initially it may be easier to place the object directly on the floor, allowing the cat to walk over/through the object. As the cat gains confidence, you can begin slowly to move the object off of the floor requiring the cat to jump over/through the object.

Step One - Hold the lure in your hand. Place your hand in front of the cat, moving it over/through the object. For "jumping through a hula hoop," you would start with the lure on the same side of the hula hoop as the cat. Move the lure through the hula hoop with your hand and the cat should follow your hand and then end up on the other side of the hula hoop with the lure.

Step Two - When the cat follows the lure by jumping over/through the object, click then reinforce.

Step Three - Add a cue. A common verbal cue is "jump" or "hoop." A common visual cue for this behavior is

moving your finger from the “start” to the “finish.”

AND DON'T FORGET *to show us your training chops, and your cat's new talents!*