

# Apartment Cat Life (Is your cat happy?)



Life for an apartment cat can be quite boring or melodramatic. A nice quiet apartment on the top floor can make for a very bored cat, while a cat on a middle floor will experience all sorts of intrusions on their day. It may be the dog next door incessantly barking, the kids running up or down the hallway, or even the movers of another apartment may trigger an episode of anxiety in your apartment cat. These situations often have overlapping ways to resolve themselves. The first thing you need to recognize is if your cat is indeed bored or stressed out.

A bored cat may sleep all day and then have kitty crazies all night. Few people I know appreciate this kind of cat crazy behavior at night, but it often comes from being able to sleep the day away. A cat's natural instinct is to hunt at dawn and dusk when the most amount of prey would be available. To fulfill this need in an apartment dwelling cat one should consider food puzzles that mimic hunting activity. One can place high value treats in prime resting locations and then gradually make finding those treats more difficult. Providing several perching locations to view

the outside can help mitigate some of the boredom.

Cats experiencing apartment anxiety may never come out of the bedroom while you are gone. Every noise they hear in the hallway can trigger a quick trip under the bed or a retreat to the closet. How do you know your cat is experiencing this kind of anxiety? I recently observed a client's cat look at the door, his body stiffening, and it was clear, the cat was ready to dart to his nearest safe spot. Can you imagine living life that way in a 1 bedroom apartment? So a few questions with his owners and we developed a plan to help reduce the cat's anxiety. Anxiety in cats can create all sorts of problems if the triggers cannot be resolved or mitigated.

Food puzzles to help keep this cat's mind occupied and distracted from the outside disturbances were introduced. We also encouraged using Alexa and the Smart TV to their fullest potential. Pets benefit just as much as people do from music therapy. Classical for Pets or Relax My Cat TV were introduced. In both cases, we encouraged several play sessions of 15 minutes in the morning and evening. Play is also a great bonding activity and confidence builder in stressful situations.

Considering your cat's environment is important to keeping them happy and healthy. We often forget that the soft, purring, cuddle creature next to us is a finely tuned predator and prey. Looking to improve their apartment life comes with recognizing the behavior your cat is showing you. Often simple steps can be taken to improve their quality of life and yours.



Beth Pasek is the Owner of Finicky Cat Sitting & Behavior, LLC. She is an established 10 year professional Cat Sitter, a Cat Behavior Consultant, Managing member of Northeast Ohio Professional Pet Sitters, member of the International Association of Animal Behavior Consultants and Certified by KPA in Train Your Cat.