

## INDOOR SPORTS FOR FUN-LOVING FELINES

Like dogs, cats benefit greatly from flexing their physical and mental muscles. Providing an exciting and enriching environment can keep your cat healthy, agile and limber, provide weight control, and prevent many behaviour problems. Plus, play helps strengthen friendships (of all species!) and adds a healthy dollop of fun to both of your lives.

Test which feline sports your pet excels at by trying the five games below. Please note: Foil balls are not safe for unsupervised play.



### BATHTUB BASEBALL

This game is a great choice for cats with dreams of becoming a homerun slugger. Put your cat in a clean, dry bathtub (with the drain plugged) and show your

cat a ping pong ball.

Bounce the ball off the

side of the bathtub and watch your cat chase the ball and give it a "bat." If the ball starts to slow down (or your cat hits it out of the park...err, tub), give it another roll to restart the game.

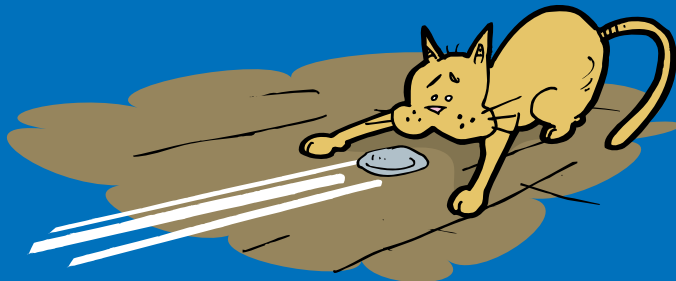
### STAIRCASE SPRINT

The staircase sprint is perfect for cats who are famous for spontaneous mad dashes around the house. With your cat at the top of the stairs and you at the bottom, toss a ping pong ball against the side wall in front of where your cat is sitting. When the ball bounces down the stairs, your cat will race down the staircase to chase after it. When the ball reaches the bottom of the stairs, fling the ball back up to the top of the staircase.



## HARDWOOD HOCKEY

Play this game on hardwood, tile, or linoleum floors with plenty of "rink room." Help hone your cat's puck control by breaking off a square of aluminum foil and scrunching it up into a hockey puck shape. Show your



cat the puck and then flick it with your fingers so that it slides across the floor. Cheer your cat on as he chases after the puck and "stick handles" it with his paws across the rink.

## ROOM RACING

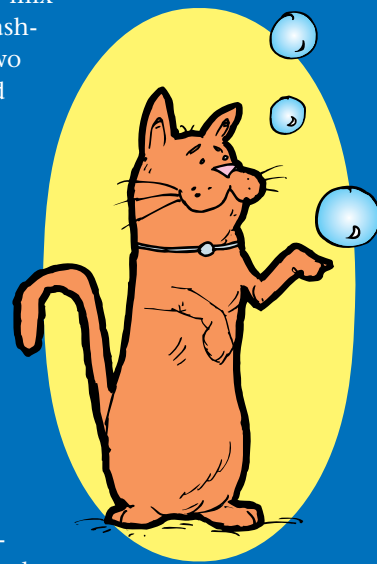
Get an aluminum foil ball, hollow plastic Whiffle ball, or catnip mouse and tie it to a three-foot piece of twine or heavy string. Determine the racecar "circuit" then encourage your cat along the track by pulling the string across the floor, over the cat furniture, or up and down your staircase. Allow your aspiring feline "Formula One" racer to capture the object every once in awhile to keep her excited.

## BUBBLE BASKETBALL

On a warm, breezy day, open all the screened windows and blow your cat a roomful of bubbles to chase and "dunk." You can buy a jar of bubble solution for children, or make your own by mixing together 1/2 cup dishwashing liquid, one cup water, two tablespoons of glycerin, and a 1/2 teaspoon sugar.

### WHEN YOU AREN'T ABLE TO SPEND ONE-ON-ONE TIME WITH YOUR FELINE,

help your cat get back to her wild roots by hiding food in different places around the house, and in or around new objects (cut holes into a cardboard box or a plastic beverage bottle and scatter food inside to make a homemade food puzzle). Interactive food toys, food balls and empty cardboard tubes or boxes can all add some spice to her life.

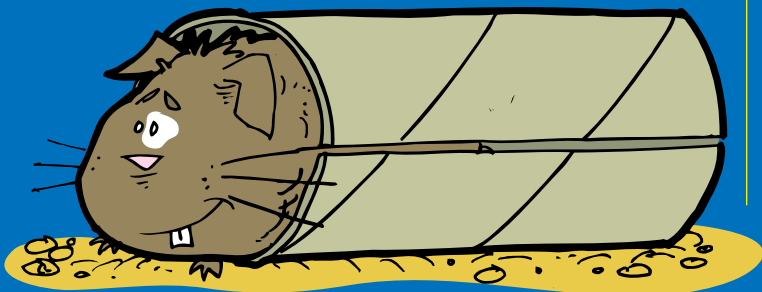


**MORE ONLINE**

Learn how to clicker train your cat, visit [ontariospca.ca/2-behavtips-cat3.shtml](http://ontariospca.ca/2-behavtips-cat3.shtml)

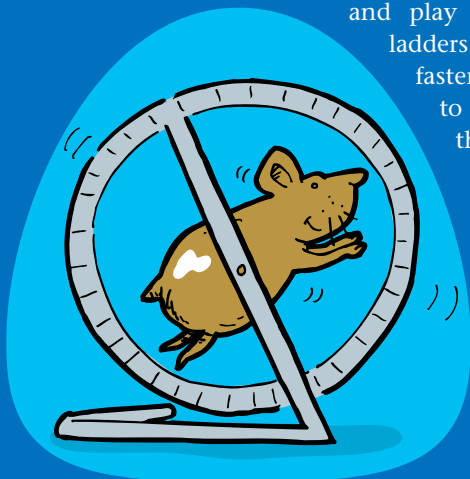
## ROCK'N SPORTS CENTRES FOR PINT-SIZED PETS

Our small animals require their daily dose of fun and excitement in and outside of their cages to help keep them healthy and happy. When exercised outside of their cage, be sure to supervise at all times, and ensure it's within a safely enclosed and pet-proofed area. Rodent teeth grow continually so it's important to provide appropriate chew-safe toys and to put loose electrical wires or dangerous items out of reach. Below are some tips on creating fun and fabulous sports centres for your pint-sized pets.



**GUINEA PIGS ARE GENTLE, SOCIAL CREATURES WHO LOVE TO PLAY.** Good guinea games offer tunnels for chewing and playing in, such as paper towel and toilet paper rolls (slit up the side so they can't get stuck inside) or "chubes" (often made of vegetable parchment). Plastic balls designed for small animals provide additional entertainment, as well as non-toxic wooden toys, plastic spoons and small stuffed animals. Let your guinea run around in a room in your house for extra exercise every day. An excited guinea makes a chorus of loud, happy whistles! Guinea pigs do best with another guinea pig playmate.

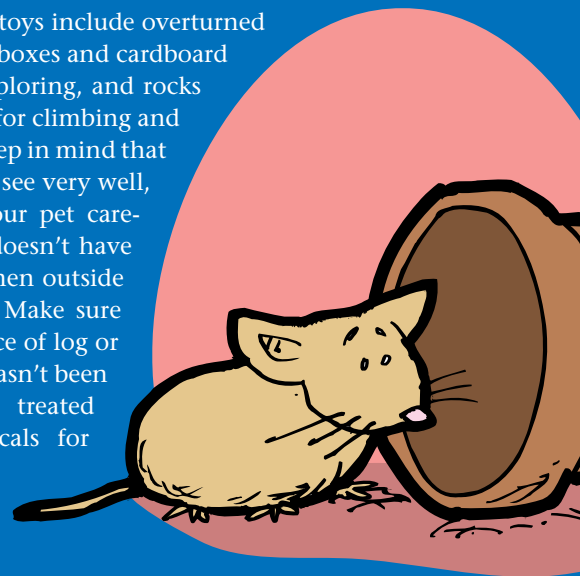
**NOCTURNAL BY NATURE, HAMSTERS LOVE THEIR EVENING WORKOUTS.** Exercise wheels provide a great source of activity, combined with hammy chew toys, such as pieces of dog biscuit, or pesticide-free twigs from beech trees, maples, willows, hazelnut bushes, or fruit trees. Cardboard boxes, toilet and paper towel rolls are also safe for hamsters to burrow in, chew on, and play with. Wooden ladders and branches fastened securely to the inside of the cage can help hamsters show off their climbing agility. Scattering food pellets into the cage is an easy source of stimulation.



**RATS AND MICE ENJOY TONS OF TOYS.** Cardboard paper towel tubes make great tunnels; cardboard egg cartons are perfect for climbing and chewing; wooden blocks satisfy a rodent's need to gnaw; and plastic or solid metal exercise wheels provide hours of fun (avoid wire versions). For a special rat hammock, tie a thick rope across the cage or use an old dish rag! Ladders and branches are also great toys, and don't forget small balls (but no rubber ones). Make a mouse maze with paper towel tubes and boxes with entrance holes cut out. For a tempting treat, place a brown paper bag, open and on its side!

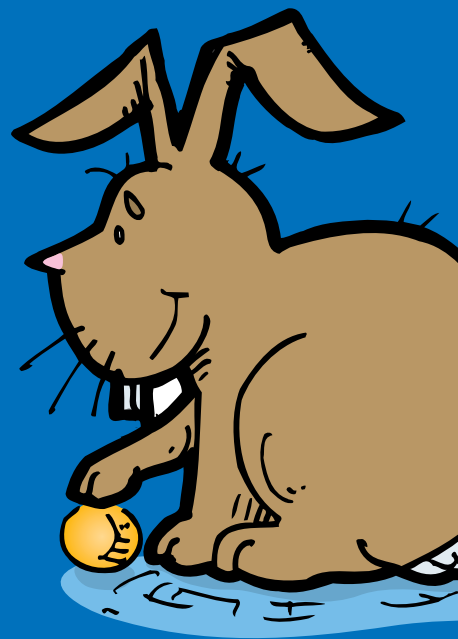
### COOL GERBIL TOYS ADD SPICE TO LIFE.

Great gerbil toys include overturned flower pots, boxes and cardboard tubes for exploring, and rocks and ladders for climbing and crawling. Keep in mind that gerbils can't see very well, so watch your pet carefully so he doesn't have accidents when outside of his cage. Make sure he has a piece of log or wood that hasn't been painted or treated with chemicals for his chewing pleasure.



### ROMPING RABBITS ENJOY ACTIVE FUN.

Rabbits enjoy things they can toss, roll, chew on and bat. Inexpensive toys can include paper towel or toilet paper rolls, wicker, hard plastic baby keys, cat toys that are solid balls, a log (that hasn't been sprayed with paint or chemicals), or a fallen branch from an apple or cherry tree. Rabbit cages should offer some tempting diversions including wooden boxes or rocks they can get up on or go under. When the weather is nice you can let your supervised rabbit play in your fenced backyard (make sure that pesticides and fertilizers have not been applied to the grass).



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