

FAQ: My cat is up half the night, either meowing or playing and making too much ruckus. What can I do so I can get some sleep?!!

Cats are nocturnal, which means they are up at night, and sleep during the day. You will have to 'reset' your cat's internal clock and then reward appropriate behavior.

First, do have at LEAST two 15-20 minute exercise sessions per day with your cat. Use a toy that you can drag around (Cat Aerobics or Cat Dancers are great) and really get him running and jumping. Then put that toy away only to bring it out for your second exercise period later in the day. Do rotate toys into play every couple of days; put out three toys and then pick those up only to put out a different three. Do make sure you have areas for your cat to climb up on window perches, cat trees, cat condos, etc. Leave boxes and paper bags out for the cat to explore as well.

Also try some mental exercise as well. Try putting your cat's food in a roll-a-treat ball. It has a hole for you to pour your pet's dry ration in and in order to get the food out, the cat must roll it; thus getting some exercise but more importantly, providing mental exercise as well. Hide treats in rooms your cat is allowed in; hide treats a cat tree/condo as well. We suggest NOT feeding your cat from a bowl but put all his daily food into a food search activity such the Roll A Treat ball, buster cube or cutting narrow L shapes in a tissue box that would allow on the cat's paw to get into the box (put the dry food in the box).

AVOID at all costs, touching, talking to, feeding, etc. your cat when they are doing a behavior that you do not want (like the vocalization and/or scratching/playing). These are all things that REWARD behavior and thus will increase it.

Just before bed, do a heavy exercise session, feed your cat a big meal and then ignore him. Even in the middle of the night, you must IGNORE your cat.

Once you have gone to bed, that is it. Do not touch, talk to, pet, feed or play with your cat (especially if it is at 4am!). You must ignore all attempts to get you up! Keep a spray bottle filled with water by your bed. If your pet is bothering you, without a word, casually pick up the bottle and spray him (set on a straight stream, like a bullet). Do not touch or feed, talk to or play with him! Repeat as often as necessary (don't give up!) to teach him to stay away from you at that time of the night/morning AND remember that the cat needs MORE exercise during the day.

If you lock your cat out of the bedroom or in another room at night (which is fine), you MUST ignore all the scratching and crying. You can try putting a plastic carpet runner upside down on the carpet were he is scratching/walking (the pointy ends up) so it isn't so fun! You can also try locking your cat in a far distant room from your bedroom or even in a large dog crate located in the far kitchen. If you let your cat out when he is acting "hysterical" then you are rewarding that type of behavior and it will continue. Put in earplugs if you need to but it is VERY IMPORTANT you do NOT give into his antics. Just IGNORE him.

Don't worry if your cat get worse and more insistent in his demands at first; in their mind all that fretting got some attention from you initially (even if it was for you to throw them off the bed..."got you to touch me!"). If you don't respond to any of it, he may initially cry/scratch longer/louder in an effort to gain your attention ("Gee it

use to work...are you people deaf now?!"). His efforts should start to drop off within 10 days if not sooner (if you don't reward them!).