

# HOW TO PREVENT & REDIRECT OVERSTIMULATION IN CATS

## Need More Help?

Find additional resources at [pasadenahumane.org/behavior](https://pasadenahumane.org/behavior).

## What to Watch For

- Cats who do not get a lot of mental stimulation can get easily frustrated.
- Take your time and assess the cat's body language. Look for ears swiveling or twitching, widening of eyes and pupils or intently watching you, tail flicking or wagging, and vocalizations such as chirping or grumbling.

## Take Breaks

- Take many breaks from touching and reassess the cat's body language frequently.
- Just because the cat approaches right away for head bumping and rubbing does not mean they want to continue interacting for extended amounts of time.

## Stay Calm & Reward

- The cat will sense your own energy level. Breathe deeply, let kitty hear you exhale, and use quiet, calm movements.
- Reward calm behavior with quiet praise and treats.

## Prevent & Redirect

- Use a flat hand while delivering treats and toys, or better yet, place them on the floor. Never use your fingers to "entice" a cat to play.
- Avoid leaning over the cat or attempting to pet the cat's belly.
- Redirect any batting or swatting with an appropriate toy such as a kick stick (large catnip plush toy). Use treats or smaller toys to lure the cat to back away from you.
- If the cat tries to bite or scratch you, don't panic. Stay as still as possible. Avoid running or jerking your hand away. Fast movements will probably only provoke more of the same behavior. Never punish your cat with loud noises or water.
- If a cat is actively biting your hands or feet, be still and push back into the cat's mouth. They will release their grip. Don't use a high-pitched voice to reprimand the cat or use sudden movements to pull your hand away. The cat will think that's a great game and continue to play with your hand. Stay still, push back gently, and redirect with an appropriate toy.

We are always here to help! You can find additional behavior and training resources at [pasadenahumane.org/behavior](https://pasadenahumane.org/behavior).



PASADENA HUMANE

361 S. Raymond Ave.  
Pasadena, CA 91105  
[pasadenahumane.org](https://pasadenahumane.org)