

TEACHING YOUR CAT TO “Paws”

Definition:

Cat stands on his rear legs reaching for the sky with his front legs.

HOW TO TEACH:

Paws: Stand or sit next to or in front of the cat, holding your clicker and treats. If you have treats that the cat wants, then the cat will wait for you to give him one. He will offer different behaviors. When he offers a behavior where one or both of the front legs come off the ground, click and treat (C/T). As he starts to lift his front legs off the ground, continue to C/T each incidence. Wait for him to lift his legs farther off the ground each time.

Adding the cue:

You are ready to add the cue when the cat begins to offer the behavior all the time. Say “paws” as the cat’s front legs are completely stretched in the air. After a few sessions you can begin to say “paws” before the behavior. Remember that the cat should be offering the behavior before you start using verbal cues.

COMMENTS:

- If the cat is too distracted, start working the cat in an area (e.g., bedroom) that the cat uses as a favorite hangout.
- The behavior may happen very quickly, so make sure you are paying close attention to the body position of the cat.
- Keep training sessions for cats to no more than two minutes or 10 treats for each behavior. Take breaks -- grooming the cat or giving attention at appropriate times -- between each behavior session.