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TEACHING YOUR CAT TO “High Five”

Definition:

Cat touches one of his front paws to your hand.

HOW TO TEACH:

High Five: Sit or squat next to or in front of the cat. Hold your hand flat and in front of the cat, within paws reach. When he lifts one leg off the ground, click and treat (C/T). C/T any paw movement toward your hand. When his paw touches your hand (final behavior) C/T.

Adding the cue:

You are ready to add the cue when he touches his paw to your hand all the time. Say “High Five” as the cat’s paw is touching your hand. After one session you can begin to say “High Five” before the behavior. Remember that the cat should be offering the behavior before you start using verbal cues.

COMMENTS:

- If the cat is using his claws during this behavior, hold your hand in place and wait for him to retract them, then C/T.
- 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. Take breaks -- grooming the cat or giving attention at appropriate times -- between each behavior session.