



sonoma
HUMANE
SOCIETY



HEALDSBURG
CENTER *for Animals*

sonomahumane.org

HELPING YOUR CAT LIVE A HEALTHIER LIFE THROUGH WEIGHT MANAGEMENT

Overweight cats are at a higher risk of health issues like diabetes, skin issues and arthritis. Being overweight also decreases the quality of a cat's life. They are unable to thoroughly groom themselves all over, have trouble getting around, feel uncomfortable and may possibly be in pain. However, through diet and an active lifestyle, your cat can maintain a healthy weight and live a healthier life.

Feeding

Feeding your cat limited amounts of food anywhere from twice a day to several times a day is recommended to prevent your cat from excessive eating. Many owners are accustomed to free feeding, which involves leaving a pile of food out, especially when they have multiple cats. However, free feeding may increase the chance that your cat will overeat. Cats are not always the best judge when it comes to excessive eating. They may eat because they do not feel full or out of boredom. By managing how much your cat eats, you are able to keep an eye on your cat's appetite. A change in appetite could be an indication of illness, and these changes can be hard to detect when your cat is free fed. New research has also shown that the activity level in cats increases with multiple small meals a day.

Exercise

An active cat is a healthy cat. Exercise helps maintain a healthy weight and can prevent issues that occur due to boredom, like overeating. Provide your cat with plenty of toys, such as balls and furry mice that they can bat around. There are also interactive toys that can be turned on when no one is home. However, the best form of play involves both you and your cat. We recommend a daily structured play session (see our handout: "Play With Your Cat"). By playing with your cat every day, you are ensuring that it receives the exercise it needs.

Mental Stimulation

Mental stimulation is also important to help your cat live a healthier life. By stimulating your cat's mind, you can decrease boredom and prevent health and behavior problems from occurring. For daily stimulation, we recommend clicker training (see our handout: "Cat Clicker Training"). Clicker training is fun for both you and your cat!