



# Target Training Your Cat

Target training is a training method to teach your pet to touch a part of his/her body to a specific object. This type of training is also used to teach a cat to move from point A to point B, jump through a hoop etc.

**What you'll need:** *Jackpot reward + Target object + Clicker .*

**Step 1. Find you kitty's motivator:** Training cats is much easier when you know their preferences. You must use a motivator your cat is willing to work for (this is called a "jackpot"). For food motivated cats, this could mean tuna, baby food, chicken etc. Use something they highly value while keeping in mind any dietary restrictions.

**Step 2. Timing:** If using food, ensure to train before meal time. Also, catching your kitty mid-nap might not be the best time to train them. Always avoid training in a distracting environment.

**Step 3. Positioning:** The best way to present a target object is to hold it about an inch away from your cat's face. When you place something near a cat's face he/she will usually sniff it - a nose touch is often the easiest way to start their target training.

**Step 4. Rewarding:** Whether you are training your kitty to touch the target with his/her paw or nose, always click then reward him/her immediately after touching the target.

**Step 5. Increasing target distance:** Once the cat is readily touching the target consistently, then move the target object a few inches away so the cat will now have to take a half of a step toward the target. Continue practicing this step until your kitty does it consistently, then increase the distance little by little. If you move the target too fast, your cat will let you know by not attempting to touch it. He/she may appear to be giving up, when in fact, your kitty doesn't know what to do. If your furry friend isn't responding, move the target closer toward them until he/she is responding again. Then try increasing the distance by a smaller amount in your next attempt.

**Step 6. Teaching a verbal cue:** In addition to having the visual cue of presenting the target, after your cat has mastered the behavior of touching the target consistently, start adding a verbal cue such as "target" or "touch". Start with saying the word immediately (1 second) after the kitty touched the target, *then click and reward*. After a few repetitions (5-10 times), change to saying the verbal cue before presenting the target object, then *click and reward* as soon as your cat has touched the target.

**Step 7. Training frequency:** Repeat this about 8-10 times in each training session. Cats learn faster with quick (no more than 10-15 min) and frequent training sessions. They also crave routine, so use it to your advantage and try to keep your training sessions at around the same time each day so your kitty comes to expect it. Every cat is unique so make sure to follow your cat's rhythm and keep the experience pleasant for them. Sometimes cats need a break to expend their energy in order to refocus! Remember to be patient with your furry friend throughout their training and ask for help when you need it.

**Congratulations, your cat is now target trained!**