

[TEMPLATE ARTICLE FOR NEWSLETTERS]

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### **Why does your cat hunt? Understanding your cat's instincts.**

Ever notice that your cat crouches low, wiggles their back end, and suddenly launches? That pounce isn't random - it's a hunting instinct!

Cats are natural-born hunters, and from a young age it's common to see kittens and juvenile cats, pouncing – you may have even seen them pounce on one another! As domestic cats evolved from a larger wildcat, that hunting drive remains deeply ingrained, and cats don't just hunt for food - they hunt for fun too.

A cat's hunting behaviour can include watching, following, chasing, pouncing, and biting the prey. Many pet cats today may not require these skills for food, as they are provided with food by their owners. However, your cat hasn't forgotten its big cat history, and when you see your cat trying to catch a feather or pouncing on a ball, this is your cat expressing some of those hunting behaviours.

Whether for food or for fun, cats often target small species of birds, lizards, mammals, and more, affecting our native wildlife population. Understanding your cat's hunting instincts can help you to channel it in a safe way that is both fun for your cat and helps protect wildlife. Providing play sessions with your cat helps satisfy those instincts and reduces the drive to hunt, as they are effectively hunting the toys with you!

Are you ready to play with your cat? Follow these tips below for interactive play:

- Use toys like feather wands to mimic prey movement.
- Provide daily play sessions of 10–15 minutes.
- Create a scavenger hunt for your cat with biscuits
- Let your cat catch the toy at the end of play sessions

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