



## Guide to Mouthy Cats

Cats that are not otherwise aggressive sometimes become easily over stimulated and mouthy during play. These cats typically need a way to burn off excess energy. By burning off this energy, these cats will most often become calmer and play more appropriately.

*Follow these steps to prevent your cat from being mouthy in the home:*

1. Keep your cat physically active.
  - a. Make sure to play with your cat 20-30 minutes every day. Wand toys are a great for this!
  - b. Take your cat on a walk! Use a cat harness and leash.
    - i. Start off indoors.
    - ii. Desensitize your cat to the harness. Put the harness on your cat and allow them to become acclimated to the feeling.
    - iii. Once your cat is walking comfortably, attach the leash. Don't try to guide the cat, simply allow the cat to walk on the leash and harness.
    - iv. Now you can move outdoors! The sights, sounds, and smells are great mental stimulation for your cat.
2. Keep your cat mentally stimulated.
  - a. Puzzle toys are a great way to keep your cat thinking. These can be purchased at a pet store or made at home. Here are some examples of homemade toys:
    - i. Clean pizza box with squares cut out of the top. Fill the box with toys and treats.
    - ii. Clean cardboard egg carton with treats. Place treats in the compartments.
    - iii. Crumple some treats in a piece of newspaper.
  - b. Positive reinforcement training is another great way to keep your cat mentally stimulated. Clicker training is the most effective way to train cats.
3. Avoid "rough housing" with your cat.
  - a. Avoid using your hands to play with your cat. Use a toy instead.
  - b. Only cuddle with your cat when they are calm and unlikely to be mouthy.
  - c. If your cat becomes mouthy during petting, remove your hands and ignore your cat. Give them a puzzle toy or play with them using a wand toy.

If you have tried what is provided here and still have questions, contact [larimerbehaviorhelp@nocohumane.org](mailto:larimerbehaviorhelp@nocohumane.org) or call 970-226-3647 ext. 5130