

Training Your Cat Not to Jump on Counter Tops

Cats jumping up on counters in the kitchen can be a nuisance, plus very dangerous for the cat if he happens to jump on a hot stove versus a counter. Several methods have been used to prevent or change this behavior.

We generally want to use what is called 'remote correction,' meaning the cat will not know where the correction came from. This will help prevent the cat from displaying the behavior simply to get attention, or waiting until we are not around to correct him.

If we see the cat starting to jump up on the counter, we can throw a pop can filled with a few coins and taped shut, toward the cat. We do not want to hit the cat, but want to startle him so he stops what he is doing. This works fine if we are in the kitchen waiting for him, but how do we correct him when we are not around? This is where imagination comes in.

Placing cookie sheets filled with water on the counter will give the cat a very unpleasant experience the next time she tries jumping up there.

A plastic Mouse Trap makes a loud noise to scare a cat from jumping up. Certain noises can be used as

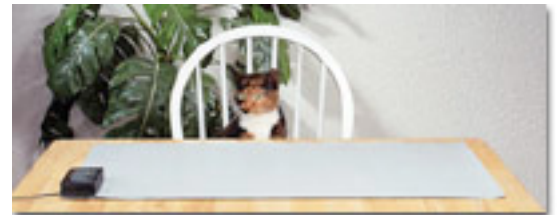


deterrents — the sound of a popping balloon, as an example. Blow up a balloon. While your cat is watching, pop it. If this is done several times, the cat will soon start to detest balloons, at which time you can place balloons along the edges of your counter. There may be other items your particular cat does not like because of the sound they make, e.g., cans of air used to clean computer keyboards. Placing several of these on the counter within visual range of the cat, may also persuade your cat to stop jumping up.

There are several devices available commercially which may be helpful.

Large plastic devices which look like mousetraps can be placed on the counter, and when the cat jumps on them, the paddle will slap making a loud, scary noise.

A **Scat Mat** on table will deter a cat from jumping up. There are also 'scat mats' which will give the cat a small electric shock (like a carpet shock) when the cat jumps on them.



Finally, why does your cat jump up on the counter? If it is food that is enticing him, keep food off of the counter and put it in cupboards unless you are in the kitchen. If 'fun things' are often on the counter — pens, paper bags, pieces of paper, etc., clear these off the counter as well. If the counter is near a window, close the curtains or pull down the shade so the cat can not use the counter as a vantage point for surveying his outside kingdom. **Bottom line:** if the counter is empty and boring, there will be no positive reinforcements (food, toys, view) for getting up on the counter. Simultaneously, increase the interest on ground level. Buy some new toys, but do not put them out all at once. Rotate which toys are out so they will seem more interesting and not the 'same old thing.' Set up some paper bags, cardboard boxes, etc., to allow a good game of hide and seek. Your imagination is the only limiting factor.



