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● Issue 34 | ● Vol. 1 | ● 2011

JAR's

Cats Awake at Night

Many cats spend a good part of their daytime hours snoozing, they like nothing better than finding a comfortable and warm spot and settling down to enjoy a little catnap.

This may be especially so with an indoor only cat whose human companion is out all day earning the pennies. With no company or stimulation to keep the cat awake she or he sleeps a lot of the time.

This often means the cat is full of life in the evening and at night, and this could be a problem when it comes to you getting your much-needed sleep.

Your cat awake and active at night can mean broken sleep or even entirely sleepless nights for you, which means that you are constantly tired. This is a far from ideal state of affairs!

Is your cat being a bad kitty by keeping you awake? Does your cat have a secret agenda to torment you with sleep deprivation?

No, it's not really your cat's fault. In their natural state cats are nocturnal hunters, they stalk their prey at night. Centuries ago cats ventured into human settlements because they discovered that where there were humans there were also rats and other rodents. This arrangement was good for both parties, good hunting at night and shelter during the day for the cats and the humans had the rodent problem solved for them.

Years later the rodents were not so much of a problem for the humans but by this time many had found that they enjoyed the company of cats.

Cats began to be kept as pets and the humans fed their feline

pets so there was no need for them to go elsewhere to hunt for their food. But the hunting instinct remains with cats to this day and so does the nocturnal instinct.

Can the cat awake problem be solved?

This problem most usually affects "indoor only" cats because cats that have access to the outdoors via a pet door can slip out at night and satisfy their hunting instincts. But many humans in China prefer to keep their cats indoors for the safety of the pet (indeed, pets can face many threats and danger outside).

If you are at home in the daytime, try to find ways to keep your cat awake by keeping her amused and stimulated. Talk to her as you do your chores, pet her frequently. It is not recommended to stop all of her catnaps though.

Do you play with your cat?

You should, playing is fun both for you and your cat and helps increase the bond between the two of you.

If your cat's nighttime activity is causing you to lose sleep try a play session with your cat shortly before you go to bed, this may just tire out your cat so she or he is not so active.

Involve interactive cat toys in the play sessions. The fishing pole type and the toy mouse on a string variety, even rolling a ball for your cat to chase will get kitty burning off some energy. Have a variety of toys available and rotate their use to maintain your cat's interest. Don't overdo it, the aim is not to exhaust your cat but to get rid of excess energy.

At first your cat may only be interested in playing for a few



Jaiya's Animal Rescue

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minutes, that's okay try playing a little longer the next night. The energy that your cat spends playing represents the energy a cat would spend hunting, and at the end of a hunt, a successful one anyway, is a meal. So feed your cat a small meal after the play session. In this way you are recreating your cat's natural nocturnal habits and it just may mean she or he will be a little less active at night.

Don't expect this to work instantly

It could take much longer than a week, but keep patiently trying and you just might have success. If you have been allowing your cat in your bedroom at night you may have to make the decision that this practice has to end if you are ever going to get enough sleep. If your cat has got used to sleeping (or rather used to being awake!) in your bedroom this is not going to be easy – but you will have to be determined. Yes, your cat will most likely protest at being shut out of your bedroom. It is likely that your locked out feline will yowl, cry or scratch against your door. You will have to resist responding to that. Resist even going to the door and telling kitty off. Any reaction by you to your cat's protests will only have your cat protesting more. Fix aluminum foil over the door to discourage scratching and if necessary use ear plugs or earmuffs to combat the howling. You may want to try confining your cat in another room with her bed and a few, non-noisy, cat toys. Whatever you try to stop your cat from being awake at night, you will need patience!



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