Counter Jumping, How to Prevent

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff

HOW TO keep your cat off the counter

CURIOSITY OFTEN GETS the best of our cats. Oftentimes, this means they jump onto our kitchen or bathroom counters while we prepare meals or ready ourselves for work. However, this behavior is dangerous, unsanitary, and a nuisance. But how can you help stop counter cruising?

THE SCIENCE BEHIND COUNTER JUMPING

Counter jumping is a learned behavior. That is, your cat has learned there is a reward for counter cruising. The reward may be a taste of the food you are preparing. Or it could be the chance to play with a pile of stacked mail. Or, the reward could simply be a moment of your attention as you place your cat back onto the floor.

But counters are dangerous locations for your cat. Kitchen and bathroom countertops hold potentially harmful objects, such as knives, pots of boiling water, cosmetics, curling irons, and more. Counters also harbor household cleaner residue, which could make your cat ill. This behavior is also unsanitary since bacteria and pet waste are spread from the litter box via your cat's paws.

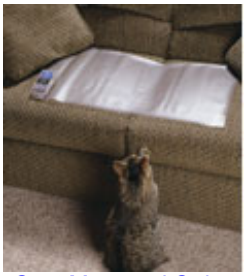
PREVENTING COUNTER JUMPING

Eliminate the reward of counter cruising to help stop this behavior. To do so, confine your cat to a different room with a new toy while you prepare meals. Also, clear counters of mail, car keys, and other objects with which he can play. Then use remote correction to help stop this behavior. Remote correction is the act of safely correcting your cat's actions without his associating the correction with you.

Useful remote correction tools include textured or electronic pulse mats, motion-activated sprays or buzzers, and double-sided tape. Each creates an area your cat finds uncomfortable whether you are present or not. Chances are, if the counter is empty, boring, and unpleasant to your cat, his curiosity will take him elsewhere.

X-Mat

SSSCAT Spray



Scat Mats and Strips

Tattle Tale Alarm

*Unauthorized use of any images, thumbnails, illustrations, descriptions, article content, or registered trademarks of **Foster & Smith, Inc.** is strictly prohibited under copyright law. Site content, including photography, descriptions, pricing, promotions, and availability are subject to change without notice. These restrictions are necessary in order to protect not only our copyrighted intellectual property, but also the health of pets, since articles or images that are altered or edited after download could result in misinformation that may harm companion animals, aquatic life, or native species.*