

Behavior FAQ: Getting on Counters, Tables and Other Tall Objects

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Cats love to be on high places, so climbing onto things comes naturally for them. Because the desire to be above the floor is a natural cat behavior, it may not be realistic to think you can completely stop it. A better idea is to give your cat her own high places for climbing. Kitty condos are available in many pet catalogs and pet stores. Or, if you're handy and have time, you can make your own.

If your cat has been lucky enough to find something to eat in these areas, that gives him even more motivation to explore your counters and tables. You must ensure that your cat never, ever finds things to eat, things to play with or other good things when he climbs on your counters and other objects. If he intermittently hits the jackpot, it will continue to be worth his while to climb up and see what he can find.

And if climbing gets your attention, it may have become a game for your cat. She jumps up, you yell and come after her, she jumps down and runs and you chase. What a great kitty game she's invented. Play more with your cat so her needs for attention are met in other ways. Drag toys around for her to chase. Many great cat toys are available for purchase, so find the ones that appeal to your cat.

To deter counter surfing, you can choose from a variety of harmless, remote devices that are automatically activated by your cat's presence. The SSSCat™, available from Premier Pet Products, is a motion detector that delivers a harmless spray that startles but does not harm your cat.

FIND A BEHAVIOR CONSULTANT TO HELP

Many problems are easily corrected through modification training, particularly if problems are addressed early. Find an animal behavior consultant in your area through one of the following Web sites: [American College of Veterinary Behaviorists](http://www.acvb.org), [International Association of Animal Behavior Consultants](http://www.iaabc.org) or [Animal Behavior Society](http://www.abcsociety.org). Learn more by reading "Guidelines for Choosing a Trainer or Behavior Consultant" and "Types of Behaviorist Consultants."