

Dr. Kim's feline mews



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Dr Kim says you CAN train a cat to do what it wants, when you want it to

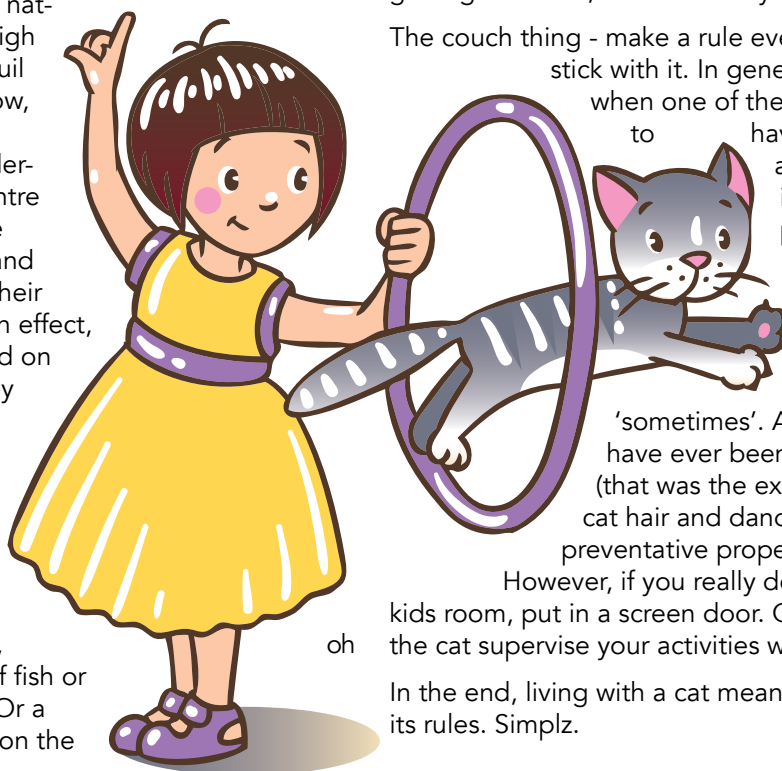
There are a couple of things you might want to discourage your cat from doing. If you use a bit of 'cat psychology', you might even find you get things YOUR way a bit more often! Here are a couple strategies that might save your roast.

How do you keep a cat off a kitchen bench?

Or from getting on the couch?

Or into the baby's cot?

These are all things cats do naturally because the spot is high up, usually warm and tranquil (till you notice the cat!). Now, cats have only developed enough brain power to understand that THEY are the centre of the universe - exactly the same as human toddlers - and they think you are sharing their thoughts. Very Zen really. In effect, the cat sees you are focused on SOMETHING and since they are EVERYTHING you must want them in the centre of your attention. Same motivation for sitting on your newspaper, book or computer keyboard. Think about it! So, they come to join you. And now, look, there's a tasty piece of fish or roast chook on the bench. Or a warm, soft and comfy spot on the sofa, or in the kids rooms.



But you have a choice!

You can set a rule you can live with and stick to it. Like, no cats on the bench while you cook. So just put the cat in its carrier and put it on a chair or stool so it can still see what you are doing. After a couple of times of NOT getting the roast, the cat usually loses interest.

The couch thing - make a rule everyone can live with and stick with it. In general the conflict arises when one of the family decides it is OK to have cat on the couch, and another decides it isn't. Create a compromise - when on the couch, the cat must sit on a towel or cloth. Just everybody agree and abide by it. Cats do NOT understand 'sometimes'. And babies - well, none have ever been smothered by a cat (that was the explanation for SIDS), and cat hair and dander seem now to have preventative properties against asthma.

However, if you really don't want the cats in the kids room, put in a screen door. Or build a shelf and let the cat supervise your activities with your baby.

In the end, living with a cat means coming to terms with its rules. Simplz.

To the cat, all these things are called a reward, so the cat wants to do it again. Shooshing it away doesn't work - the cat will just come back when you are not there!