



## Aversives For Cats

Determining an effective aversive for your cat is a case of trial-and-error, as individual preferences will vary with each cat. This is often the best method to discourage a cat from a particular action or place but will seldom work effectively without offering an alternative that is both convenient and rewarding.

### Texture Aversives

You may need to weight the “material” firmly or tape it so that it will stay put. To protect furniture or floor finish from sticky substances, attach them to a piece of foil or heavy plastic and secure that with weights or light tape.

#### Indoors

- Shelf paper (sticky side up)
- Double-sided carpet tape
- Heavy foil

#### Outdoors

- Irregular or sharp rocks, firmly set into dirt
- Chicken wire, firmly set into dirt (sharp edges rolled under)

#### Indoors or Outdoors

- Heavy plastic carpet runner (pointed side up)

### Smell Aversives

Soak cotton balls, rags or wash cloths in the “stinky” substance. To help protect carpets, upholstery, floors or furniture, place the saturated object on a piece of weighted foil or heavy plastic. To prevent the substance from seeping into the ground, use the same precautions. Outdoor substances need to be reapplied daily, due to quicker dissipation into the air.

#### Indoors or Outdoors

- Insect repellent, especially those containing citronella and/or citrus odors (check for toxicity - if safe for young children, it's generally safe for pets)
- Citric odors - colognes, concentrated juices or fresh peels
- Annoying colognes
- Some muscle rubs (NOTE: some cats react to menthol as they do to catnip - beware!)
- Aloe gel

### Taste Aversives

Some of these substances may damage furniture or floor finishes, so be sure to test them in a hidden location before widespread use. Except for hot sauce and cayenne pepper, these substances should be safe to apply to most people's skin, however, some individuals may be sensitive to them.

### **Indoors or Outdoors**

- Bitter Apple® or similar sprays and gels marketed specifically for taste aversion
- Insect repellents, especially those containing citronella or citrus odors (check for toxicity - if it's safe for young children, it's generally safe for pets)
- Some hot sauces
- Cayenne pepper
- Some muscle rubs
- Aloe gel
- Citric odors (colognes, concentrated juices or fresh peels)

**The Element of Surprise!** *WARNING: For fearful cats, try everything else before trying surprise techniques, especially those using noises!*

### **Remote Controlled Aversives**

- Motion detector that reacts with a startling sound
- Snappy Trainer® (upside-down mouse trap that's securely taped under paper to avoid contact)
- Aluminum pie plate containing water, beans or pebbles – preferably balanced precariously on a counter or other undesirable “jumping” surface

### **Human Controlled Aversives**

Use these to get your cat's attention, and then offer an appropriate alternative.

- Spray bottle or squirt gun filled with water (NOTE: avoid the super-duper water guns that have a very forceful spray)
- Whistle
- Shaker can (soda can containing nails, pennies, beans or pebbles - securely taped shut)

For more information about pet behavior and training, please **visit our website at [michiganhumane.org](http://michiganhumane.org)**.