

TEACHING YOUR CAT TO “Sit Pretty”

Definition:

Cat will be sitting with his front paws in the air, as if begging

HOW TO TEACH:

After you have taught your cat to sit, you can then move to “Sit Pretty.” Your cat will sit when he is waiting for the clicker and treat. If you wait (up to 10 seconds) the cat will raise his paws off the ground. As soon as the front paws are off the ground (even a very tiny movement), click and treat (C/T). After you click and treat, the cat will start raising his front paws off the ground more often. After the cat is performing the behavior of “Sit Pretty,” increase the distance between the ground and the paws. Increase the distance by C/T only when the paws are farther from the ground than for the last click. When you have the cat raising his paws the distance you want off the ground, then only C/T for that behavior/distance.

Adding the cue:

You are ready to add the cue when the cat begins to offer the “Sit Pretty” all the time. Say “sit pretty” as the cat’s hind end is on the ground with the paws raised. After a few sessions you can begin to say “sit pretty” before the cat sits. Remember that the cat should be offering the “Sit Pretty” before you start using verbal cues.

COMMENTS:

If the cat is too distracted, start working the cat in an area (e.g., bedroom) that the cat uses as a favorite hangout.

The behavior may happen very quickly, so make sure you are paying close attention to the body position of the cat.

Keep training sessions for cats to no more than two minutes or 10 treats. Take breaks -- grooming the cat or giving attention at appropriate times -- between each training session.