

Pausive Reinforcement Puzzle

Test your feline friend's problem-solving skills with this purrrfect experiment!



Collect:

- Smelly cat treats or a can of tuna
- Muffin tin
- Wiffle ball
- Stopwatch

Get ready to experiment!

1. Ask permission from your grown up to conduct a fun experiment on your cat.
2. Place the muffin tin on the ground.
3. Get your cat interested by showing them one of the smelly treats.
4. Place the smelly treat inside one of the muffin tin cups. Cover the cup with the wiffle ball.

Hint: If you don't have a wiffle ball, any other toy that allows your cat to see and smell the treat will work.

Start the timer!

1. Using a stopwatch, time how long it takes your cat to figure out how to move the ball out if the way and retrieve the treat.
2. Once your kitty has his paws on the treat. Stop the timer and record your findings.

Reset and repeat.

Repeat this experiment two to three more times. Make sure to record how long it takes your pet to reach the treat each time.

Analyze findings.

Compare the times you recorded. Do you notice anything interesting about the results? Did your cat get faster at retrieving the treat?

Science Connection:

If you found that your cat became faster and faster at retrieving the treat, that means your kitty was learning through positive reinforcement! In psychology, the scientific study of the mind and behavior, positive reinforcement is when a desirable thing (in this case, the cat treat) is used to reinforce a certain behavior (moving the ball). Because your kitty found a yummy treat every time he moved the ball, this taught him to repeat that action to receive more yum yums.

Let's science



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