



# So, How Do I Teach My Cat to High-Five? *(It's Easier Than You Think)*

**Just follow the simple directions below!**

## ***Before You Start***

Training should always be a fun and exciting interaction between your cat and you. Before you even start training, part of the fun for you that creates excitement for your cat will be finding a “special something” that your cat really loves.

In the training world, that special something is called a “reinforcer.” It’s similar to a reward in that it is something your cat really likes and will work for. Reinforcers fall into three categories:

- Food, such as treats, canned cat food, deli meats
- Toys, such as fuzzy mice, balls, wand toys, etc.
- Interactions, such as petting, brushing, or talking

Pick the one that your cat likes best! This will be the “reward” for learning and performing a behavior, in this case a high-five.

## ***Choose a Training Marker***

A “training marker” is a sound the cat hears immediately after successfully completing a desired behavior. In The Jackson Galaxy Project’s Cat Pawsitive program, we use special devices called “quiet clickers” to make the sound. The clicker’s sound, when immediately followed by a reinforcer, means they got it right!

If you don’t have a quiet clicker, you can replace the “click” with a clicking sound you make with your tongue, or you can use the quiet clicking sound of a click-top pen. You can also use your voice by saying “Yes!” in an excited, encouraging tone.

### ***Quick Tip:***

*Hold the clicker in your pocket or behind your back, because the sound (if too close to the cat’s face) can startle a cat if they are not used to it.*

## ***Training Your Cat to “High-Five”***

Cats often use their paws to touch items in front of them. This is what makes high-five so easy to teach for most cats. It’s best to do training at a time of day when your cat is likely to be active and expecting to spend time with you. Meal time or play time is the perfect training time! When you are ready to start training, have your cat’s favorite reinforcer nearby.



**Step One** - With a flat hand, show your cat your palm (your side of the high five) by placing your palm in front of and just above your cat's head. This will encourage your cat to reach toward you. Make sure it isn't too far away that they can't touch your hand.

**Step Two** - Wait for your cat to touch your palm with their paw. This may require some patience!

**Step Three** - As soon as you feel your cat touch your palm with their paw, immediately click your clicker. Then immediately give your cat the chosen reinforcer (a small piece of food, a few seconds of play with a toy, or a few gentle pets).

**Step Four** - Remove your hand. After waiting a few seconds, repeat steps 1-3 about 10 times.

**Step Five** - When you are confident that your cat will place their paw on your palm, you can say, "High-Five" when you are showing your cat your palm. Remember to click or say, "Yes!" and provide the reinforcer as soon as they successfully complete the high-five!

**Step Six** - Get your camera out, or even better, have a friend snap a creative picture or video of you and the cat high-fiving. Email it to [catpawsitive@greatergood.org](mailto:catpawsitive@greatergood.org) for a chance to see it shared on The Jackson Galaxy Project's and GreaterGood.org's social media!



Here's a great example of Cat Pawsitive in action from an employee at KC Pet Project in Missouri.



*If your shelter or rescue organization is interested in learning more or applying for the Cat Pawsitive program, contact The Jackson Galaxy Project at [catpawsitive@greatergood.org](mailto:catpawsitive@greatergood.org).*

