

Cat's Name

Today's Date

Date of Next Appointment

GET YOUR CAT BACK TO THEIR NORMAL

Congratulations! Your cat has received treatment to control their osteoarthritis (OA) pain.

With their OA pain under control, your cat can rediscover what they used to enjoy doing. By gradually increasing their exercise and modifying their home environment, you can help your cat get back to their normal.



Learn more
about controlling
OA pain in cats.

Osteoarthritis (OA) is a life-long disease that can be managed with pain relief, healthy weight, and regular exercise. Your cat's activity has likely decreased as their OA has progressed, resulting in reduced muscle strength and flexibility. If your cat's activity were to suddenly increase after starting OA pain treatment, they'd have the potential to develop new injuries.

To make sure your cat is on the right path, it's important to visit your veterinarian once a month for continued treatment and to talk about your cat's activity and lifestyle. This *Back to Their Normal* program is a general guide: Work with your veterinary professional or a veterinary rehabilitation professional to develop a customized plan for your cat.

Think about your cat's behavior and mobility. With your veterinarian, evaluate what *Back to Their Normal* phase your cat belongs in by marking the following behaviors that are most like your cat.

PHASE 1



No longer climbs stairs or jumps up/down on surfaces



Does not explore the house besides walking from resting spots to food/water and litter box



Does not go outside



Does not engage in play behavior or only plays from a lying-down position



Has difficulty with the litter box/has "accidents" outside the litter box

PHASE 2



Climbs up/down stairs slowly and jumps on/off of 2-foot-high surface



Is interested in exploring the house



Climbs up/down stairs and jumps on the couch or low bed



Wants to explore the house and outside



Engages in play/chase



Does not go outside



Is eager to play/chase



Is willing to jump on the table or counter using a chair or stool in between

If your cat's behavior and mobility is most like Phase 1, work toward having your cat explore the house, comfortably use the litter box, engage in play behavior, and jump up on low surfaces.

Phase 1 Fitness Plan:

- **Obstacle course:** Set up 3-4 objects for your cat to walk or jump over and 1-2 things they can crawl through or under. Use treats or a toy for motivation and repeat 3-5 times a day
- **Play time:** Use a laser pointer or cat toy and encourage your cat to chase it over a flat, nonslip surface. Play for 3-5 minutes, 2-3 times a day
- **Jumping:** Lead your cat to jump up on an object 1-2 feet off of the ground and encourage them to jump down onto a soft surface. Repeat 3-4 times, 2-3 times a day

If your cat's behavior and mobility is most like Phase 2, work toward having your cat go up and down stairs as needed, jump on/off the couch and bed (use steps if necessary), and comfortably use the litter box.

If your cat's behavior and mobility is most like Phase 3, work toward having your cat fully use their cat tree, safely explore outside, and comfortably use the litter box.

Phase 2 and 3 Fitness Plan:

- **Obstacle course:** Use the obstacle course recommendation in Phase 1 but increase the height of the 1-2 objects they jump on/off of. Use treats or a toy for motivation and repeat 3-5 times a day
- **Play time:** Use the play time recommendation in Phase 1 and add chasing up on a couch or low surface and add slightly higher surfaces when ready. Play for 3-5 minutes, 2-3 times a day
- **Jumping:** Encourage your cat to jump onto the couch or a low bed and add slightly higher surfaces when ready. When they jump down, make sure they have a soft surface to land on. Repeat 3-4 times, 2-3 times a day

Back to Their Normal Tips

Be sure to:

- Trim your cat's nails and have a scratching post available—they may want to start scratching again
- When jumping, ensure it's on soft surfaces, like a carpet, rug, or mat
- Use a large litter box (1.5x the length of your cat) with low sides

Always remember:

- Do not allow your cat access to a cat tree until they are ready to jump from those heights. Gradually add levels back as they progress
- If your cat does not clear a jump, lower the height by half
- If your cat wants to jump onto surfaces they haven't been on in a while, consider restricting access or providing in-between surfaces so they can safely get up and down
- Do not allow your cat outside unless controlled on a harness and leash

Depending on your cat's unique condition, they may require more time to build up strength. It is important that you talk to your veterinary healthcare team about what reasonable expectations are for your cat and to stay on track with treatment.