

Training Your Cat

First and foremost, **spraying your cat with a squirt bottle is not an appropriate way to deter unwanted behavior.** Positive training builds your relationship with your cat. Punishment only hurts that relationship and it doesn't work. Per Cat Behavior Associates, The squirt bottle technique only accomplishes three things:

1. It creates frustration in the cat
2. It causes the cat to become afraid of you
3. The cat learns to wait until you aren't around before engaging in the behavior

Many cat behaviors that might be unwanted are natural, species specific behaviors. Cats aren't being bad when they jump on your countertops or scratch your sofa - they're just being cats. If you punish them for engaging in natural behaviors, they will only become afraid of you. Instead, stick to positive methods of training and make sure your cat has appropriate ways to engage in normal cat behaviors.

Jumping on countertops is a cat behavior that many people don't like. When cats jump on countertops, they're typically just trying to solicit attention - higher perches make them closer to their people. Assess your environment from your cat's point of view. Where can they sit *instead* of the countertop? Consider giving them a designated, countertop-height spot in the kitchen (it can be a stool, a cat tree, or a wall-mounted cat shelf) and clicker-training them to jump to that spot only. Reward-based training such as clicker training is much more effective than punishment and doesn't break your cat's trust in you.

For more information on clicker-training, look for examples of clicker training online. We recommend visiting catster.com or adventurecats.org

