



# Yosemite Pet Hospital, Inc

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## Can Your Cat Learn a Trick or Two?

### Feline Behavior Series

Cat tricks?

Some people point to the dog's ability to learn obedience commands and tricks as proof that dogs are smarter than cats. Others point to the same as proof that cats are smarter than dogs.

We're not going to get into that argument. The important thing to remember is that cats and dogs are different in how they relate to us. Dogs have an ingrained need to be part of a family structure - to have a job to do within that family. Dogs are that way because wolves are that way - survival depends on the family, or pack.

The cat came from a different place - from solitary hunters who didn't need teamwork to survive.

If you want to put a good spin on it as a cat-lover, you could say that dogs need to be with us, while cats choose to.

Because of this distinction, you absolutely cannot get a cat to do something he doesn't want to. Something must be in it for him. With training tricks, that something is usually food. (Although some cats will work for a toy, or petting.) Teach the cat an association between a word - such as "sit" - and an action by using treats and praise.

According to animal trainer Anne Gordon, in her book *Show Biz Tricks for Cats* (Adams), you start teaching the "sit" command with a hungry cat, a table, and a quiet room. Get your cat to stand up by touching her in front of her tail and then hold the treat a little over her head, saying her name and the command "sit." Slowly move the treat between your cat's ears, but not high enough for her to pick her front paws off the ground and grab the tidbit. Instead, she'll sit. After she does, praise her and give her the treat. Work in short sessions and be patient. Your cat eventually gets the idea!

Sounds crazy? Gordon has trained dozens of animals - including many cats - for commercials, TV shows, and movies. Her book offers precise instructions for teaching 30 tricks, including jumping through a hoop, climbing a ladder, and rolling over. Great fun!

You can get your own copy of *Cats for Dummies* right here at [VeterinaryPartner.com](http://www.VeterinaryPartner.com)! Just email [Tamara@vin.com](mailto:Tamara@vin.com).

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For more pet care information, pet owners can visit the AAHA website: [www.healthypet.com](http://www.healthypet.com).

You can also receive more information on Yosemite Pet Hospital at our website: [www.Yosemitepet.com](http://www.Yosemitepet.com)

We look forward to working with you and your pets to help you provide a healthy lifestyle for your companion pet.

Sincerely,  
Yosemite Pet Hospital, Inc.

Sheila Langrock, DVM