

Pouncing On Legs

Some kittens like to pounce on legs or toes when people walk by them. This is part of kittens' **normal predatory play drive**, but can still be very annoying. Some kittens will do this to let you know they want to be played with. Either way, **you do not want to reward this behaviour with your attention**. Yelling at her or caressing her is still attention and, to a large extent, both are exactly what she wants—your attention.

This is one way the kitten can tell you she needs some interactive playtime with you or with some toys. Kittens love to pounce on things; it is their predatory play drive in action. Toys such as a laser light she can chase around the room and then pounce on when it is hovering in one spot allows her to complete her predatory play drive. If she does not receive this kind of playtime, you are leaving it up to her to find something to pounce on, such as your legs. Contrary to popular belief, **kittens do need interactive time with their families**. They do not enjoy being left alone all the time. They **need love, socialization, and playtime** with all family members.

Here are some ways you can address the pouncing behaviour:

- ✓ Make a **loud noise** to startle her (e.g., clap, snap, shake a plastic bottle with coins in it, or make a loud sound such as saying the word “Ouch” in a loud voice) and walk away from the kitten.
- ✓ Catch the kitten letting you walk by her and not pouncing on you and **mark and reward her gentle behaviour** with a nice long pet, treats, or your attention.
- ✓ When you can see that the kitten is getting ready to pounce on you, quickly get up and walk out of the room while completely ignoring her. Later, when she allows you to walk by without pouncing, give her lots of love and special attention. This is a perfect time to play with her, using a toy she can pounce on to get her predatory needs met while she is being a good girl.
- ✓ Use treats, circular touches, or simply your attention as the **reward for good behaviour**.
- ✓ Enrich the kitten's environment by offering a **more interesting variety of toys** to stimulate her mentally.
- ✓ If she is bored, she might think your legs are the only toys available to her.
- ✓ **Exchange the kitten's toys frequently**. Offer one toy at a time for a few days and then put that toy away and offer her another toy. When you exchange her toys, they will stay interesting to her. If toys are all left out all the time, she will become bored with all of them.

- ✓ In many cases, when kittens offer inappropriate behaviours, it is because they are bored.

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If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us