



Making the Litter Box Cat-Friendly

The following guidelines are meant to provide your new companion with the best possible litter box set-up. These guidelines are followed widely by professionals in the animal welfare field. However, each cat is unique. Some cats develop a location or surface preference that can complicate the inappropriate elimination issue. You may need to seek professional help if your cat continues to urinate or defecate outside the litter box after following these guidelines. If your newly adopted cat had a medical issue, behavioral intervention may still be necessary. Please contact our behavior helpline at 517-626-6060 x 141 with any further questions or concerns.

The Litter Box

- Provide multiple litter boxes throughout the home and on multiple levels of the home. The general rule is to have one litter box per cat plus one extra. However, if you have a large home, you may need more boxes.
- Use uncovered litter boxes. Covers can trap unpleasant smells and cause the cat to seek a fresher-smelling place to do his business.
- The box should be easy to enter and exit.
- Do not use litter box liners.
- The box should be out of reach of dogs and children.
- Choose a quiet location for the litter box, but avoid corners or other confined spaces. Eliminating puts the cat in a vulnerable position, so he needs to feel that he could escape easily if he felt the need.
- Avoid placing the litter box in high-traffic or noisy areas (like a laundry room or entranceway.)
- Do not use the Pellet Litter box system.
- Do not discipline your cat in any way for not using the litter box. This only causes an even more negative association with elimination.

Cleaning the Litter Box

- Scoop the boxes twice per day.
- Completely dump out the litter in each box every 7-10 days. Clean the box with unscented soap or baking soda before refilling with fresh litter.

The Litter

- Use unscented, clumping litter.
- Most cats prefer a depth of about one to two inches of litter.
- You may need to try a variety of litter types and depths to find what your cat likes best.

How to Clean Accidents

- Use an enzymatic cleaner such as Nature's Miracle to clean the stain and neutralize the odor. This can be found in most pet stores.
- Do NOT use vinegar or any product with ammonia to clean pet accidents. To cats, these products smell very similar to urine and may cause her to continue urinating in those spots.
- Do not use harsh chemicals to clean the litter box.

Building a Cat's Confidence

Cats need adequate places to play out their natural needs. This helps to build confidence and reduce stress. A cat that lacks confidence is most likely stressed out as well. Cats can develop many unwanted behaviors (including inappropriate elimination) and medical problems that relate back to some underlying stressors in their life. In order to reduce stress, the following should be incorporated into the cat's every day activities:

- Places to climb up high throughout the home. This could include shelving, bookcases, cat trees or something as simple as a milk crate that is off the ground.
- Places to hide throughout the home. This could include cardboard boxes, tunnels and paper bags.
- Places to scratch. A tall, sturdy scratching post with sisal fiber is usually the scratcher of choice for most cats. We recommend the SmartCat Ultimate Scratching post, available on www.Amazon.com.
- Interactive play. A fishing rod type toys such as products like Da Bird and the Cat Dancer. Play at least twice per day for only 10-15 minutes with the cat.
- Solo play. Leave out fuzzy mice, ping-pong balls or Mylar balls during the day for the cat to interact with. Trade them out several times a week so that they are new and interesting to the cat.