



Most felines know how to use a litter box without any coaching—it's instinctual and comfortable for your cat.

However, there are many factors that can interfere with litter box use. Since “going” outside the box can strain the new friendship between you and your cat, you'll want to encourage good habits from the start.

Fortunately, forming good litter box habits can be very simple. Read on to learn more...

Cats and Litter Boxes: 6 Tips for Success

Going to the bathroom around the home—rather than using the litter box—is one of the most common reasons for pet cats to be surrendered to shelters.

As much as you love your cat, you can probably imagine why this would be a frustrating problem. Urine and feces are a nuisance to clean up, can leave stains and odors, and can destroy carpet and furniture.

Fortunately, it's possible to prevent this sort of problem—with the right litter box know-how.

Litter box usage is natural for cats—so you'll just need to make sure your new kitty is okay with the litter box setup in your home, and after that it takes little to no training for them to use it.

Here are some important principles to keep in mind when it comes to cats and litter boxes:

Does Your Cat Have a Litter Preference?

Some cats aren't picky and will use whatever litter you buy for them. Other cats, however, have very strong opinions on cat litter types.

For example:

- Does the litter have any sharp edges that could be uncomfortable to walk on?
- Is the litter too dusty? Dust—which is released when your cat digs—can cause sneezing, or even trigger an asthma attack in cats with asthma.
- Is the litter scented? Perfumed litter can irritate your kitty's sensitive nose

Here are some clues your cat might NOT like their litter:

- They avoid scratching in the box, and don't bury their urine or feces
- They try to jump out of the box suddenly, rather than walking across the litter
- They avoid using the box altogether

There are other factors that could cause these behaviors, too—so keep reading for more ideas.

You may need to go through a few types of litter before you find one your cat likes—so purchase small containers to start with.



Does Your Cat Like the Litter Box?

If there's a hood or covering, remove it (and vice versa if you have an uncovered box), and see if your cat likes the box better that way.

Consider any obstacles, such as high sides that may be difficult for a senior kitty to step over, or a box that's too small for a large cat to fit into comfortably.

Also, some cats never get used to self-cleaning litter boxes—so if you have one and your cat isn't using it, you might want to switch to a traditional litter box.

Is the Box in an Ideal Location?

When it comes to litter boxes, location is key.

Most cats don't like "doing their business" in full view of everyone in the home. When placing the box, try to find an area that's not high traffic, but also not too far to walk to when kitty has to go.

Don't place the box too close to your cat's food and water. Also, check for loud noises near the box that your cat might not like—for example, a noisy dryer.



Are Other Pets Involved?

For example, do you have a dog who's very curious about the litter box?

What about another cat who "guards" the box and stares at your new kitty as they walk by? Or a feline who ambushes your new cat (playfully or otherwise) while they're in the box?

Any of these scenarios could make your new kitty uncomfortable—and therefore, they'll look for another place to go to the bathroom.

The best solution is to use a formula for the minimum number of litter boxes in the home, which is: One box per cat, plus one extra box.

So, if you have two cats, you would want a minimum of three litter boxes.

Place each box in a different part of the home if possible, wherever each of your kitties spends most of their time.

How Often Do You Clean the Box?

It's best to clean your cat's litter box at least once every 24 hours—or more frequently if multiple cats use the box and it gets dirty quickly.

Cleaning less often than that can make the litter box look (and smell) like a backed-up toilet—and nobody wants to use that!

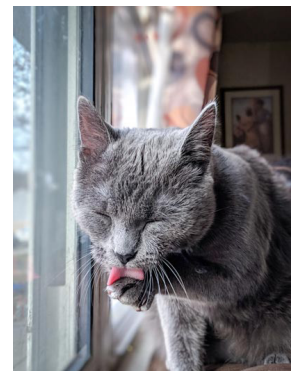
Is There an Underlying Medical Condition?

Sometimes, cats will go to the bathroom outside the litter box due to a health problem such as a urinary tract infection, other bladder problems (which can be brought on by stress such as a move to a new home), or a variety of other conditions.

There are a few reasons why cats will do this:

- In some cases, they can't help it—they have to "go" suddenly
- If going to the bathroom is painful, your cat may make an association between that pain and the litter box, and therefore avoid the box
- The behavior may also be a way to express that something is wrong

Many health problems can be cured or managed. However, the longer you wait to seek treatment, the more the undesirable potty behaviors will become learned habits that are hard to change.



So, early treatment is best. When in doubt, talk to your veterinarian for their recommendation. Many adopted cats use the litter box just fine, and never try to “go” anywhere else in the home. If that sounds like your cat, then congratulations—you’re off to a great start!

In case you ever need them, these tips are available to help solve litter box issues that may occur in the future.

More than likely, your main focus will be on bonding with your new cat—and enjoying all the playtime, snuggling, and purrs.

From our family to yours,

Fromm Family Pet Food

