

Cats and Litter Box Use

Spraying and/or peeing outside the box is the most common litter box problem veterinarians and behaviorists encounter, but one that can easily be avoided.

To keep your cat's litter box behavior problem-free, follow these litter box steps.

Get the cat to the vet

Urinary tract infections and other medical-related issues are common culprits in litter box issues. Talk to your veterinarian right away to rule out this cause.

Identify any other causes.

Have there been recent changes in the household, construction, visitors, new animals inside or outside your home, new baby, change in litter, change in litter location.

Don't scold or discipline

Your cat does not have the capacity to be spiteful. Behaviors are caused by events out of the cat's control. Disciplining your cat will only make her fearful of you and add to the problems.

Remove the smell

Cats are attracted to soiling in locations where they smell urine or feces. If the smell is partially removed, the cat will probably be triggered to "refresh" the spot. By **completely removing** the stain and any lingering scent, you will eliminate the trigger to soil there again.

This is crucial to stop the inappropriate peeing.

When cleaning, be sure to **not** use common household cleaners, especially ones containing ammonia. Instead, use specialized enzymatic or bacterial cleansers, (such as XO or Zero Odor) which can be purchased in pet supply stores or online. If the stain is already dry, soak the spot with luke-warm water and blot it as much as possible. Next, treat the area with the commercial enzymatic cleanser, following manufacturer's instructions. Repeat this process three times.

Create the ideal kitty commode.

Location

Make sure the box is easy to find. If your home has multiple levels, provide at least a box on each level. Additionally, do not place boxes near noisy appliances like washing machines or heating units that may frighten your cat. Avoid moving the box, as many cats do not like change. If you must move the box for some reason, try slowly moving it one foot per day toward the desired location.

Litter

Whether you use clay litter or a natural product like wheat, corn or recycled newspaper, stay away from perfumes and fragrances. These unnatural scents are added to make litter appealing to people, not to cats. Choose dust-free, soft fine grains rather than crystals or pellets.

A good litter to try when having issues is Cat Attract brand cat litter. (100% guaranteed)

The Box

Most cats prefer large, uncovered boxes. Although you might like to keep it covered, most cats don't care for hooded litter boxes. Covers keep odors in and don't allow kitty to keep an eye on the surroundings while taking care of business.

Another common mistake is having too few litter boxes. Experts recommend one litter box per cat, plus one more. That means a household with three cats needs four litter boxes and in different areas.

Stay away from harsh cleaning chemicals like bleach, pine or citrus cleaners, which can leave a scent in the box your cat won't like. Simply wash the litter box with hot, soapy water and rinse well.

Avoid litter box liners and scoop the box at least once a day.



Play with your Cat

Studies have shown that interactive cat play, even just 15 minutes a day, helps minimize inappropriate behaviors.

Incorporating regular play time for your cats each day will help to make them happier and healthier.

Play can include solitary play and interactive play.

Solitary play is when a cat plays by himself. Examples include batting a **ball**, flinging a **toy mouse** and scooping things out of a **puzzle box**. These types of activities mimic the behaviors cats exhibit when playing with caught or trapped prey.

Interactive play involves toys that are powered. By far, human powered toys are the best cat toys! Fishing pole type toys that closely mimic the movements of live prey when waved and wiggled in front of the cat are very interactive. Two highly recommended toys are Da Bird and Neko Flies.

Just as important as the vigorous exercise is the emotional bond interactive play builds between you and your cat.

A tired cat is a happy cat.

Use Scent Therapy

Pheromones

A feline pheromone is a chemical that triggers a social response in cats. Special glands in a cat's face, produce pheromones that are reassuring and calming and say "want to be my friend".

The presence of these pheromones creates a more comfortable environment and can assist in minimizing inappropriate behaviors such as spaying or peeing. Synthetic pheromones have been developed and are readily available in sprays, collars and plug-ins .

Flower Remedies

Flower remedies utilize various plant and flower extracts to enhance positive emotional states. (i.e. Bach Flowers or Spirit Essence)

They can be used to ease the transition of new cats into the household, to help bully cats become a bit more tolerant, to cope with the stress of a visit to the vet and whatever other factors may be contributing to your cats inappropriate spraying or peeing. There are numerous essence varieties each focused on a specific a feline behavior issue.

The best thing about flower remedies aside from the fact that they work, is that they are non-toxic and won't harm your cats.

Suggested Websites

<http://www.a-house-full-of-cats.com/> (cat behavior articles)

<http://www.americanhumane.org/animals/adoption-pet-care/cat-behavior/> (cat behavior articles)

www.petcomfortzone.com (Feliway pheromone products)

www.spiritessence.com (Flower/Plant Remedies)

www.go-cat.com (Da Bird cat toy)

www.nekoflies.com (Neko Fly cat toy)

www.preciouscat.com (Cat Attract litter)

www.petmate.com (giant litter box)

www.zeroorderpet.com (urine odor eliminator)

www.reidell.com (urine odor eliminator)

<http://www.xospray.com/> (urine odor eliminator)

Suggested Books

Cat Wrangling Made Easy by Dusty Rainbolt

The Cat Bible by Tracie Hotchner



www.adoptastray.ws