

Tips for the litter box

One of the top cat behavior issues is mistakes outside the litter box. There is really no such thing as "litter training" a cat. They generally initiate association with the litter box on their own.

If your cat has these outside the box accidents, the first thing to consider is the health of your cat. Many medical conditions can cause a change in a cat's litter box habits. If your veterinarian determines that your cat is healthy, then the problem is behavioral and in most cases can easily be corrected. Punishment is NOT the answer and does not work, but here are some suggestions that will get results.

- Choose the litter box location carefully. It should be a place that affords your cat some privacy, but not so out-of-the-way that your cat has trouble getting to it in time. Make it a quiet place where your cat can feel safe and comfortable.
- Don't skimp on the number of boxes. You should have at least as many litter boxes as you have cats. You might also consider placing them in several locations around the house so that no one cat can "guard" the box area and prevent others from using it.
- Keep the box clean. Scoop out the litter box daily. How often you change the litter depends on what type you use. Clay litter needs changing twice a week, while scoopable litter can go two to three weeks between changing.
- Don't use a covered box. They trap odors inside, and they may not allow your cat enough room to turn, dig, and position themselves as they'd like.
- Use a fine-grained type of litter that has a softer feel. Do not use litter that is too coarse, pellet-type or those made from citrus peels. The smell of scented or deodorant litters can also put off a cat.
- Keep the depth to 2 inches or less. Most cats don't like litter to be too deep. Long haired cats especially prefer a thinner layer of litter.