



10 Tips to Ensure Your Cat Uses the Litter Box

- 1. You should have one box for each cat you own, plus one extra.** Place the boxes in different areas of the house. If you place them all in a row, the cats may perceive them as only one large box.
- 2. Optimally, place a box on each floor, or at opposite ends of the house.** This will prevent an individual from easily blocking access to the box to another cat.
- 3. Keep boxes away from feeding stations, and select quiet, low traffic areas.** Avoid placement near machines that are associated with sudden noises like the washing machine or furnace.
- 4. Be sure that the cat is able to use the box undisturbed by dogs or small children.** A baby gate, raised in the door jam, will allow only the cat to easily slip under.
- 5. Most cats prefer a large, low-sided, uncovered box.**
- 6. Cats typically do not like change.** If your cat is reliably using the box, avoid arbitrary changes in litter type (i.e. buying whatever is on sale that day), box location, etc. Always offer a new litter type, box, or box location as an additional box. In the event the cat is not attracted to it there will still be access to an “acceptable” box.
- 7. Use an unscented litter.** Many cats prefer a very fine grained, unscented scoopable litter (particularly those who have had a problem with inappropriate elimination on carpeting, fabric furniture, etc). Litter depth can be important to some cats. Often a minimum of two inches is preferred. Watch your cat for individual preferences.
- 8. Avoid liners or additives.**
- 9. Scoop the box daily, and dump its contents weekly.** People commonly do not dump their scoopable litter often enough. Do not wash the box with anything other than hot water (i.e. no detergents, soaps, or cleansers).
- 10. Clean any accidents up with an enzyme odor eliminator.** This is a class of products, and the most effective ones can be purchased from your veterinarian. Be sure never to use any cleaner containing ammonia. The scent may cause your cat to mark over top of it because of its similarity to the odor of urine.

Inappropriate elimination in cats can be associated with a host of medical problems. It is imperative that you see your veterinarian if your cat begins to display this behavior. It is also never effective to punish a cat for inappropriate elimination, and often it will escalate a problem. If you have followed these recommendations for a couple of weeks and are still having problems, please consult a veterinarian or animal behaviorist.