

Litter Box Training and Maintenance

Posted by David on December 5th, 2010

Litter Box Training

Kittens learn by observing their mother. No training is necessary; you just need to make sure your new cat knows where the box is. You may want to limit your cat's freedom to the room the box is in until you know she is using it regularly.

When your cat begins to get the idea, don't take her good behavior for granted. Continue to praise her for using the litter box.

Litter Box Behavior

If your cat's litter habits change, have her examined by a veterinarian to first rule out any medical problems. Then check to see that it's not the litter box itself that is dissuading your cat. Is it clean? Is there something about the location that your cat doesn't like such as new people or pets in the house? Once your cat has adapted to the change, she should revert back to her normal litter habits.

Litter Box Basics

Cats are fastidious and can be very fussy about their litter box, its cleanliness, location and the type of litter used. So be sure to keep your litter box as clean and comfortable as possible for your cat.

Choosing a Litter Box

Get a full-size litter box (kittens may use a smaller box) made of a non-absorbent material, like plastic, for easy cleaning with soap and warm water and to prevent odors from being absorbed by the box. Click here to learn more about the [Tidy Cats® brand Litter Box](#).

Placing the Litter Box

When selecting a location for your cat's litter box, choose a quiet, out-of-the-way place that is easily accessible and will ensure your cat's privacy. Keep the litter box away from your cat's eating and sleeping quarters. Once you choose a location, don't move it or you might confuse your cat. If you have more than one cat or a large house, you might want to place a litter box on each side of the house.

Types of Filler

The core ingredient of most conventional cat box fillers is naturally absorbent clay. While clay provides some odor control, additional ingredients can be added to control the growth of odor-causing bacteria and to diminish dust.

Time-release agents can control odor longer between litter changes. Scooping fillers offer moisture-activated clumping action, so that waste can be isolated and scooped out, leaving behind only clean litter.

Crystal-type fillers are considered state-of-the-art in litter. Non-toxic micropore technology keeps your litter box dry and fresh a long time, which means less work for you. Regular stirring allows you to go up to 30 days between changes (one cat). Silica gel crystals are extremely effective in dehydrating moisture and trapping odor.

Paper fillers are recommended by veterinarians for post-surgical use. *These fillers are 3x more moisture absorbent than clay, **and 99.7% dust free.

*Qualitative results from those veterinarians responding to a survey of a random sampling of veterinarians in the United States. September 2003

**by volume compared to clay

Pellets are designed for low tracking, are tough on odors, and are non-toxic.

Choosing the Filler

[Click here for help selecting the right filler.](#)

Switching Fillers

Ease your cat into the new brand slowly to reduce stress and confusion. Begin by mixing one-third of the new filler with two-thirds of the old. Then, gradually increase the amount of the new brand until your cat becomes used to it.

How Much Filler Should You Use?

The amount of filler you should use varies by filler type. Although it is best to check the directions on the package, the following is a general guide by filler type:

- Conventional: Maintain a depth of 2-3 inches
- Scoop: Maintain a depth of 3-4 inches
- Crystals: Maintain a depth of about 1.5 inches

Cleaning the Litter Box

The litter box itself will need to be disinfected on a regular basis to remove odors.

- Conventional: Remove waste areas daily. Maintain cat box filler at a depth of 2-3 inches for pawing and covering. Clean the cat box with warm water and a mild detergent between complete litter changes.
- Scoop: Remove waste areas daily. Add more filler as needed to maintain a 3-4 inch depth. Clean the cat box with warm water and a mild detergent between complete litter changes.
- Crystals: Scoop out and discard dehydrated solid waste daily. Use your scooper to thoroughly stir crystals daily, which will distribute liquid waste, speed evaporation and increase the life of the product. Clean the cat box with warm water and a mild detergent between complete litter changes.

Disposing of Litter

When disposing of litter, wrap it in two bags and tie it securely. Do not flush the litter down the toilet or dispose of it down a drain, as it can be extremely harmful to plumbing.

Cat Box Diseases

Note:

We want to remind those with suppressed immune systems or pregnant women that a parasite sometimes found in cat feces can cause toxoplasmosis. For more information on toxoplasmosis, contact your doctor. Please wash your hands after handling used litter.