



LITTER BOX TRAINING

Cat species in the wild bury their feces to cover their tracts. Using this characteristic to your advantage, felines make wonderful tidy pets. Most kittens are litter box trained before they are weaned. If the kitten you adopted is more than six weeks old, he may already be trained.

Whether you adopted a kitten or an adult cat, it is highly recommend to start out by confining your new family member to one area or room in your home, with a litter box filled 1 1/2 inches of plain clay litter. Place the litter box where your kitten/adult cat will have privacy. Make sure the room is warm and dry. Show the kitten/adult cat where his litter box is located, place him in it gently, then introduce him to the litter by moving his paws in a digging motion. Do this several times during his first few hours at home. The adult cat may catch on immediately.

The kitten may need some reassurance. At 1/2 hr. intervals, take him back to the litter box and place him in it. Also carry your kitten to his litter box when you see him start to walk around restlessly (especially after meals and waking up) or if he starts searching for a corner or scratching on the carpet. After this introduction, do not move the litter box and always make sure it is accessible.

A suggested litter box routine includes: one litter pan per kitten if more than one kitten is adopted, filled 1 1/2" of plain clay litter, scooping out solid waste and stirring the litter twice a day, and twice per week dumping all the old litter, thoroughly washing out the litter box, and refilling with clean litter. While a dirty litter box is not advisable, neither is a box that is kept to clean for a kitten. Getting the idea of where it is proper to go, it is a good idea to leave the litter a little dirty so the kitten knows this is where he went before, and this is where he should continue to go.

A healthy happy cat will have no problems with the litter box, how ever sometimes problems do arise, your cat is wetting in other areas in your home. If this should happen, please try to locate the problem. In most cases it is a cry for help or frustration. A common medical problem that the feline population encounters is Cystitis (bladder infection). It is painful and the cat may link discomfort with the litter box so he tries to avoid the pain by not using the litter. Both males and females are subject to cystitis and may show blood in the urine, in the females case it may also be a uterine infection. At the first sight of an unwanted puddle, the pet should be taken to the veterinarian to be examined, if the problems are due to infections, antibiotics will clear it up, you may have to retrain litter box habits.

Other reasons your pet may not be happy and feeling stress are: Not spayed or neutered. Jealousy over the arrival of a new pet or family member, his feelings may be hurt or he objects to sharing his litter box. Recent change in the home. Has menu has been changed. Has the litter box been moved from the acceptable location. Has an outdoor cat been converted into an indoor cat or visa versa. Is it foam rubber your cat is wetting on, it may give off an odor that draws a cat to urinate on it. Does the litter box need cleaned. Some cats don't like certain types of litter. Try

using a mild soap that doesn't leave an odor after cleaning the litter box. Only you the owner can have insight to why your pet has stopped using the litter box.

If your feline friend happens to experience the litter box blues. Here are some tips you can use. Most important don't let it establish as a habit. Go to your veterinarian first, if that fails, do your investing work. Virtually all cats get litter box religion if caged for a week with their litter box. In the mean time, permanently remove the urine odor. A mixture of baking soda and aquarium charcoal spread over the area, cover and ignore it for two weeks, then vacuum the mixture up. the odor should be gone. Also, check your local pet store supplier for products out on the market.

