



Litterbox Usage

There are several reasons why a cat may eliminate outside of their litter box. Follow the guidelines below to help ensure the best chances of having successful litterbox usage.

It is recommended to first make sure that your cat is cleared medically of any potential illness. Medical issues such as urinary tract infections, stones, kidney health, constipation and many other causes could factor into why a cat is not using the litterbox. If an underlying medical issue is causing eliminating to be painful, then your cat will start to associate the litterbox with pain and then try to find an alternative location that doesn't hurt. Set up an appointment with your veterinarian as your first step.

Make sure you have a proper number of litterboxes available to your cat(s). The general rule is to one litterbox for each cat in the home plus 1. For example if you just have one cat in the home then, there should ideally be 2 litterboxes. If you have 2 cats in the home, there should be 3 litterboxes set up and available for them to use, etc.

Litterbox set-up and location is key. Be sure that all litterboxes are set up in an easily accessible place and are away from any air vents or drafty areas. Ideally, this location should not be in a high-traffic area in which the cat may feel cornered or have limited entrance and escape routes. Litterboxes should also be away from a cat's food and water bowls.

An unscented, fine sand-like substrate will typically be a cat's most preferred type of litter. Anything scented may be too harsh or overwhelming for your cat's nose and create an aversion to the box. A pellet-type litter may be too hard on their paws and/or may be too difficult to dig into.

Choosing the best litterbox for your cat's preferences may require some trial and error. A litterbox should be at least 1.5-2x the size of your cat. Most cats will prefer boxes with lower sides, as they are easier to get in and out of, though some cat may also prefer a box with high sides or even a covered box. You can try getting multiple kinds of boxes and set them all up at once then see which your cat prefers. Let your cat be your feedback, and if you see that they are using only the uncovered box with low sides then replace the other boxes with the same type.

Keep the litterboxes clean, scooping them out twice a day and doing a deep clean of the box at least every two weeks using warm and soapy water (soap should be unscented).

Stress can also be a factor in litterbox usage. If your cat is eliminating on your clothing, bedding, or other items such as backpacks, shoes, etc., there could be an environmental stimuli that is

causing stress or fear. They choose these items because they smell like you, and meshing their scent with yours can help comfort them. Conversely, if there's a new person or animal coming into the home and your cat is eliminating on their items, then it could be your cat trying to cover up their scent with the cat's own. Try to identify the trigger and remove it, or if it's something that can't be removed, then consider management techniques, FELIWAY diffusers, or potentially anti-anxiety medication as recommended by a behaviorist and prescribed by a DVM.