

# FELINE INAPPROPRIATE ELIMINATION AND MARKING



Increase the number of litter box locations in your home to a minimum of the number of cats in the house plus one. Litter boxes that are directly next to each other (or within 5 feet) count as one box, not two. Offer your cat a “buffet” of litter choices by placing identical boxes (in addition to the boxes that your cat already has) filled with different types of litter next to each other near the spot where the litterbox is now. This will help you determine your cat’s litter preference. Leave the boxes out and available for 2 weeks. Maintain the same standard of cleanliness that you maintain in all of your boxes. Litter choices include, but are not limited to, newspaper-based litter, clumping litter, litter crystals, non-clumping litter, Cat Attract litter, and scented litter.

Your cat’s preference will eventually become clear. When it does, continue to use that litter. Litter boxes should be in a quiet location with multiple escape routes from that area. There should be a litter box available in the areas where each cat spends most of its time. If your house has multiple floors, there should be at least one box per floor. If the area is very large, you may need multiple boxes per floor, even if there is only one cat.

Do not yell at or physically punish your cat. Do not rub your cat’s face in its urine or feces. This is likely to scare the cat and will not improve the situation. Thoroughly clean the areas where your cat has eliminated with an enzymatic odor neutralizer that is specially designed for pet odors. Some examples of these are Nature’s Miracle®, or Anti-Icky Poo®. A black light (you can order them online) can be used to search for spots that need to be cleaned. Steam clean your carpets before using a carpet deodorizer or enzymatic cleaner.

Do not allow your cat access to areas from which he can see outdoor cats. You can cover the windows with window film, which can be purchased from any hardware store. You can also close the door to the rooms that have window access to prevent your cat from entering.

Place your cat’s litterbox in the place where he is eliminating most frequently. If he chooses to eliminate in the box, leave it there for the next 7 days, then slowly

move the box six inches a day to the location of your choosing. If your cat avoids this box and urinates or defecates around it, please let us know. Increase your cat's quality time with you by scheduling specific play and training sessions during the day. Do not interrupt your cat while he is using the litterbox. Do not carry your cat to the litter box while he (or you) are angry or frustrated.



Limit the dog's access to the litterbox with baby gates (raised enough for the cat but not the dog), or pet doors with collar chip access (only the pet wearing the collar can get through the door). Microchip access doors are also available to prevent small dogs from entering litterbox areas. Do not feed stray cats around your home.

Spray Feliway® Original on the areas where your cat has urine-marked. Test it on a small area for staining before spraying on valuable items. Daily application is necessary until the cat is shown exhibiting facial rubbing at that location. You can also use a Feliway® Original diffuser in the rooms that have been most violated by your cat. Place scratching posts in the same area to encourage cheek marking or foot pad marking (by scratching). Some cats do not respond to pheromonal therapy. If the product does not show efficacy you can discontinue use after one month.

Generally, cats prefer a clay based, unscented, clumping (scoopable) litter that is between 2-3 inches deep. The litter should be scooped at minimally once daily, but may need to be scooped more frequently depending on your cat's preferences.

Some cats prefer open boxes while others prefer covered boxes. Most cats do not like liners. The box should be fully emptied of litter once a week, and cleaned once per month. Do not use ammonia-based or commercial disinfectant products. Soap and water are adequate cleaning agent.

Increase the size of your litter boxes to at least 24" x 36". Some cats prefer covered litter boxes while others prefer uncovered boxes. Offer your cat a choice of litter box types. Many cats prefer open litter boxes with high sides and one low lip (2-3") to enter and exit. You can determine your cat's preference by placing different boxes (in addition to the boxes that your cat already has) filled with identical types of litter next to each other near the spot where the litterbox is now. This will help you determine your cat's litter box preference. Leave the boxes out and available for 2 weeks. Maintain the same standard of cleanliness that you maintain in all of the boxes. Once you determine which type of box your cat prefers, replace the other boxes in the house with that type of box.

Enrich your cat's environment, so that he will be occupied while you are not home. Hide treats in the house, so that he spends a large portion of his day "hunting" (feral cats spend up to 3-4 hours per day hunting). You can hide them under the sofa, coffee table, rugs and refrigerator. Over a couple of days, he will get the idea and begin to hunt the treats during the day. You can hide cat kibble or treats. Increase the number and variety of hiding places and high places that are available to your cat for rest and play. Each cat in your family should have a special hiding location that is removed from the other cats, but is still in a desirable space. This will be their safe area. To determine where your cat's preferred resting place should be, watch him while you are home to see where he prefers to be. When you determine where he likes to be, you can place a cat bed there. Preferably the location would be high up so that he would feel safe. Place food rewards and catnip in the new resting place. Reward him with food whenever you see him there.

Stress in cats is regulated by space. You can increase the space that the cats have by adding shelving specifically to allow the cats to move around the house. This also allows them to avoid the dog if they should so choose. Interrupt all signs of aggression between your two cats with a verbal noise or the "touch" cue. Redirect them to play with separate toys once you have their attention. Aggression can be obvious (e.g., hissing or swatting) or it can be less obvious (e.g., a cat blocking another cat's entry to the litterbox).