



Tips for Correcting Litter Box Habits

Inappropriate litter box use is very frustrating and is a major reason why people surrender or rehome their pet. Before making the decision to place your pet elsewhere, there are many solutions that can help you and your feline live together more harmoniously. If your cat is using inappropriate location to urinate or defecate, use the following tips to help correct their behavior – try one at a time and move on to the next if it is not successful. Try not to change too much all at once!

1. **Reintroduce them to the home.**
 - a. Place them in a clean room (one without carpet is preferred) with a clean litterbox.
 - b. Leave them in the room for 24 hours. (If they use, continue, if not, wait another day.)
 - c. Open the door to the main part of the house, keeping all bedroom doors closed. If the cat can successfully use the box with access to the main house, then you can start opening doors.
2. **Limit the rooms that the cat can go in when unsupervised.** For example, keep all bedroom doors closed but let them hang out in the living room.
3. **Limit or reduce stressors.** Cats are very susceptible to stress and can be easily stressed out. If you introduced a new thing, got a new pet, spend less time at home, moved, got a new roommate, had a baby, etc. your cat may be acting out. Be mindful of any changes to their routine.
4. **Try a different style of litter box.** If you are using a small covered litter box, try a large uncovered litter box (or vice versa). Just like people, cats have preferences and may not like going out in the open or in too tight of a space.
5. **Try a different type of litter.** There are hundreds of shapes sizes, brands, smells, materials, and more of litter. Change it up until you find a litter that both you and your cat can agree upon.
6. **Try pheromone plug-ins** to reduce stress and encourage appropriate litter box use.
7. **Use an attractant spray in the box and ALWAYS clean any urine/feces messes with an enzymatic cleaner.** This is so their natural attractant does not lure them back to the inappropriate location.
8. **Take your pet to the vet!** Urinary tract infections and bladder stones/sludge are common in cats and are very painful. They associate that pain with their litter box and try to find somewhere else that won't hurt them to do their business. Treating these can be as simple as a round of antibiotics or a change in diet if caught early.