



Kingborough

KEEPING CATS INDOORS DOESN'T HAVE TO BE CRUEL

Cats living inside have a much longer life expectancy than those allowed to roam free. Not only do roaming cats hunt birds and other animals, but they are more prone to being run over, injured in fights, attacked by dogs and catching diseases from other cats.

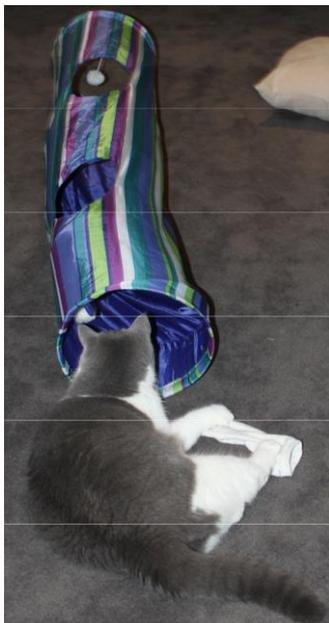
Indoor cats generally spend 80 per cent of their day asleep! Cats generally get all the exercise they need from their daily stretching routine. Although they do not require as much attention as dogs, they will not be happy if left alone inside all day with nothing to do. There are many things you can do to make the life of your indoor cat more interesting.

Keep your cat entertained

- Think about adopting two cats if your situation allows it. A playmate will take up hours of your cat's time and sociable interaction with another cat can greatly enrich their daily lives.
- Provide your cat with somewhere to perch near a window. Ideally kitty will be able to lie in the sun as well as amuse himself by watching the world outside.
- A **scratching post or 'cat gym'** will help kitty keep his claws off the furniture as well as provide a high place to sit.

Make sure it has a very heavy base, if not you can reinforce it by adding weight to the bottom. Your cat has to be able to climb up the scratching post without it falling over.

- String up a small mirror ball where it catches the sun.
- Use a laser pointer (hand held or automatic). Watch puss chase a red dot for exercise and entertainment for you both. 'Auto' laser toys for your cat can do the same job when you are at work.
- Provide kitty with a play tunnel to explore.



- Leave some empty cardboard boxes around to allow for puss to explore.



- Ensure puss has a sturdy pot of fresh cat grass to nibble on. Cat grass can come from a number of plant species, and can be made of cereals like rye, wheat or barley.

Cat Grass aids in digestion and the removal of hairballs, it also contains a variety of essential nutrients and goodness. It can be purchased from hardware shops, pet shops, RSPCA, nurseries and online.

- Leave a few ping pong balls around – including one in the bathtub.
- Give kitty catnip from time to time. Drives some of them crazy!

DO NOT leave string, ribbon or plastic bags out for kitty to play with unsupervised – cats can easily get into trouble with these.

Food and water

Fresh water should be available to your cat 24 hours a day. Be sure you do not leave an unlimited amount of food accessible to kitty all day. Free feeding cats can quickly turn into fat cats!

There are many toys on the market in which food morsels can be hidden inside to make kitty's search for food a little more interesting.



Common Indoor Cat Problems – FAQ

Urine spraying a problem?

Un-neutered male cats in particular may have a habit of spraying urine onto vertical surfaces (kitchen cupboards, the lounge etc.). Neutered cats will also spray. In fact, one in 10 cats will urine spray at some point in its life and, sadly, many will get the boot for this treatable condition.

There are thought to be a number of reasons for this including:

- Territorial marking.
- Insecurity or stress (caused by such things as moving house, a new cat, other pet or person being introduced into the house, new objects in the house or a changed routine).
- Physical illness.

Spraying is kitty's way of leaving you a message in plain sight.

How can I stop my cat from spraying?

1. If he is an intact (un-desexed) male, get him fixed. Intact males are the most likely to urine spray and desexing can decrease the spraying by 90 per cent (Bergman).
2. For other cats that do not fit into the above category you will need to look for the obvious triggers.

If kitty sprays after spying an outside intruding cat, block viewing access for these cats.

If the problem is a new friend or schedule that keeps you away from home kitty might leave her message to express her feeling about the situation. The solution here might involve more quality time with Kitty and more interactive toys to help her pass the time.

Even when you cannot identify the problem, often just cleaning the urine well with enzymatic cleaner (ideally citrus based) and maintaining a sparkling clean litter box cuts down the spraying dramatically.

If the spraying follows spats with other household cats, keep the squabblers separated by confining them to different areas of the house. Provide ample food, water and litter box sites in different areas and create many different preferred-resting areas. This way, the cats can avoid competing with each other and can have their own space.

As a last resort you may need to consult your vet about the temporary use of medication to solve the problem, but managing both the cat's behaviour and environment is always the preferred option.

Litter box mishaps:

Cats may reject using a litter box for a number of reasons:

- Response to a change in the usual brand of kitty litter – cats are repelled by strongly scented kitty litter.
- Inappropriate size or placement of litter box. They like privacy too.
- Poor design of litter box – can puss get in and out easily?
- Cleanliness – litter boxes should be cleaned daily as cats may reject an overused box.



- Medical conditions such as intestinal parasites can trigger sudden gastric events in which puss has no time to get to the litter box.
- Psychological issues – kitty can misuse the litter box as a way of indicating boredom, stress, loneliness or even spite!

Preventing future toileting issues:

Be sure to clean up the mess completely using citrus based cleaners. Ammonium based cleaners will only encourage kitty to return to the scene of the crime

The number of litter boxes in your household should equal the number of cats plus one, and the boxes should be one and a half times the length of the cat. They should be in a convenient location, at least four inches deep, and cleaned twice daily.

Renting with Pets?

It can be difficult to convince landlords to take you on when you have pets. The *Australian Companion Animals Council* has produced a useful guide to assist people who are renting with pets.

Find it at this link: http://www.acac.org.au/pdf/renting_tenantguide.pdf

Information on training roaming cats to stay indoors or in your backyard:

<http://www.catbehaviorassociates.com/making-an-outdoor-cat-into-an-indoor-cat/>

http://www.humanesociety.org/animals/cats/tips/bringing_outside_cat_indoors.html

<http://www.cat-world.com.au/indoor-vs-outdoor-cats> (benefits of indoor & contained cats)



kingborough.tas.gov.au

Civic Centre, 15 Channel Hwy, Kingston, Tasmania 7050 Locked Bag 1, Kingston Tasmania 7050
AusDoc: DX 70854 T: (03) 6211 8200 F: (03) 6211 8211 E: kc@kingborough.tas.gov.au