

# Litter-Training Your Cat 101

From choosing the right litter box to the right kind of litter, here's all you need to know about litter-training your cat!

By Tanya Kane

Every cat owner I know tells me how convenient it is that they do not need to walk their cats for their daily business. My usual retort is: "You and your cat are lazy!"

But secretly, I have to admit on the mornings when my dog wakes me up at 5:00 AM because she just has to go, I wish she was a cat. Don't get me wrong: I love my walks with my dog. But I also love my sleep!



IMAGE COURTESY- LAPINA-SHUTTERSTOCK

Also because I have two cats as well, I know my friends are kind of right. In the argument of dog versus cat as a pet, the litter box definitely works in favour of cats.

## **How Easy Is It To Train A Cat To Use A Litter Box?**

The answer is: very. Most cats instinctively want to dig and cover their waste without any training. So the idea of a litter box always appeals to them pretty immediately.



IMAGE COURTESY- ANDREY\_KUZMIN-SHUTTERSTOCK

## **How Do I Introduce The Litter Box?**

Cats are private animals. Find a place in your home that is a little secluded and quiet so that your cat doesn't feel like it is being watched. Ensure you keep the litter box as clean as possible, because cats are also meticulously clean and will avoid using a dirty litter box. If you have multiple cats, have multiple litter boxes available, as many cats do not like sharing.



IMAGE COURTESY- AJLATAN-SHUTTERSTOCK

### **What Kind Of Litter Should I Use?**

Try and find a good quality, biodegradable litter. This is not only good for your cat but also good for the environment.

If you plan to flush the waste, ensure that you are using a specific 100% flushable litter. Other litters can create havoc in your sewage pipes.

Litters made with silica dust have been linked to respiratory disorders in cats as well as human parents. Chemical fragrances added to litters have also been known to cause toxicity in cats. The best way to keep the litter fresh is to make sure it is cleaned frequently.

Recycled newspaper, sawdust and wood shavings are also great options for litter box fillers.



IMAGE COURTESY- ZORAN PHOTOGRAPHER-SHUTTERSTOCK

### **How Do I Choose The Right Litter Box?**

Choose one that will be comfortable when your kitten is full-sized. A cat should be able to comfortably turn around to naturally use their paws to cover the waste.

A very restricted litter box may result in accidents outside. Initially, a cat may not like a fully covered box, so it's best to start with an open tray. Once your cat is trained to use the tray regularly, the top lid can be introduced. It is best to observe if your cat is comfortable before leaving the top on.



IMAGE COURTESY- AFRICA STUDIO-SHUTTERSTOCK

### **How Do I Deal With Accidents?**

Use enzymatic cleaners to clean all accidents. Such cleaners don't merely mask the scent of the waste, they break it down. This way, the cat will not be able to find the scent again.

Once you have everything set up, place your cat into the litter box and see how it reacts. Most cats will take to it in literally 24 hours. A great way to also encourage your cat to use the box is to place some earlier waste in the litter box. The scent will guide your cat to the box and encourage use.

Some cats may take longer, so it is important to be consistent and patient. Ensure the cat has access to the litter box 24 hours of the day. Also, make sure the litter and/or the box are not uncomfortable for your cat.

In a short time, you will see your cat happily trotting off to do its business in the privacy of his own personal toilet!