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**How to Keep the Cat Litter Box
and Its Surrounding Area
Clean and Smelling Fresh**

Table of Contents

Foreword.....	3
In Search of the Best Litter Box.....	4
Cats and Litter Boxes: The Golden Formula.....	7
It's All about Location.....	9
Time to Start Cleaning.....	12
What's That Smell?	18
Final Words.....	22
A Special Gift.....	23

Foreword

For all cat parents
who wish to have a home
that smells like spring flowers,
Regardless of how many
fuzzy and playful cats
they have...

In Search of the Best Litter Box

Let's get real for a moment here. It's your cat using the litter box, **but** you're the one deciding what sort of box your cat will use. The thing is, for many people, a covered cat litter box is the best choice.

It provides cats with privacy, it contains smell, and it hides your cat's excrement from your immediate view. That's what **we** think. However, when choosing a cat litter box, what matters isn't what you want but what your **cat** wants.

Top 3 Tips for Choosing the Best Cat Litter Box

You're the one buying the litter box, but consider your cat who will be using it. Think about all the gifts you get for your birthday or for Christmas that you don't want or are tired of getting. All those pretty but pretty useless mugs, picture frames, and socks that you're probably going to gift somebody else. Come on, no need to deny it.

That said, when it comes to choosing and buying the best cat litter box, you ought to remember the following simple tips.



1.5 times longer
than your cat

Size

Know the approximate size of your cat, and get a litter box that is at least 1.5 times longer than him. Your box should reach the chest area of your cat when sitting, so as to provide privacy and enough space for your litter.

Height

Now, if your cat is still a child or already a [senior](#), he might have trouble getting in and out of the box. In this case, you want a box with one side lower; you can get trays or boxes already cut that way or modify a regular box by yourself.



Type

One word—trays. [Covered litter boxes](#) are convenient for humans but not for cats because:

- They make moving around awkward
- They don't offer more than one escape route
- They trap smell, which makes them tens of times more unpleasant to cats
- They tend to be cleaned less often as you can't see how dirty they are

See how the positives we listed earlier become negative when you see them in your cat's point of view?

So go for thick uncovered boxes or trays that will allow your cat to move freely and the smell to diffuse. And if you really dislike scooping poop, you can get uncovered, electric-operated, self-cleaning ones.

Cats and Litter Boxes: The Golden Formula

So, you've figured out the best type of cat litter box. What do you do next? Buy the right number of litter boxes, that's what.

(Number of cats) + 1 = Required number of litter boxes



+



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How Many Cat Litter Box Should You Have?

This formula isn't set in stone, but it's certainly been proven effective by the thousands of people who have followed it, including me. The formula is simple:

(Number of cats) + 1 = Required number of litter boxes

This formula is especially crucial if:

- You have a multi-level home
- You're considering adding another cat to your family
- You're in a multiple-cat household and experiencing persistent litter box problems.

You see, most cats, live harmoniously and lovingly when [properly and gradually introduced](#). However, just because they're able to share most things with each other doesn't necessarily mean they will be okay sharing one litter box.

Aside from the fact that they may feel icky eliminating in a box somebody already used, a single box just doesn't provide enough clean spots for two or more cats looking to pee or poop. This is especially the case when you're out at work the whole day, meaning nobody's there to clean the litter box for them.

And you know what cats do when they think the litter box is too dirty? They race toward the carpet, the dark little nooks, or, worse, your fabulous sofa to do their business. The horror!

So if you want to keep your home as clean as possible, make sure to provide your cats with the right number of litter boxes. If you have one cat, prepare two litter boxes. If you have two cats, then make sure you have three boxes. And so on and so forth

The Secrets to Perfect Litter Box Placement

What's the use of having two or more litter boxes when they're placed next to each other? If you do that, your cat will simply think that he got one big litter box. Yes, to them, two joined boxes is just one box, and that will likely still result to the litter box problems I mentioned earlier.

Where Should You Place a Cat Litter Box?

I've already given you tips on how to choose a cat litter box, so let's go straight to the qualities of the perfect litter box spot:



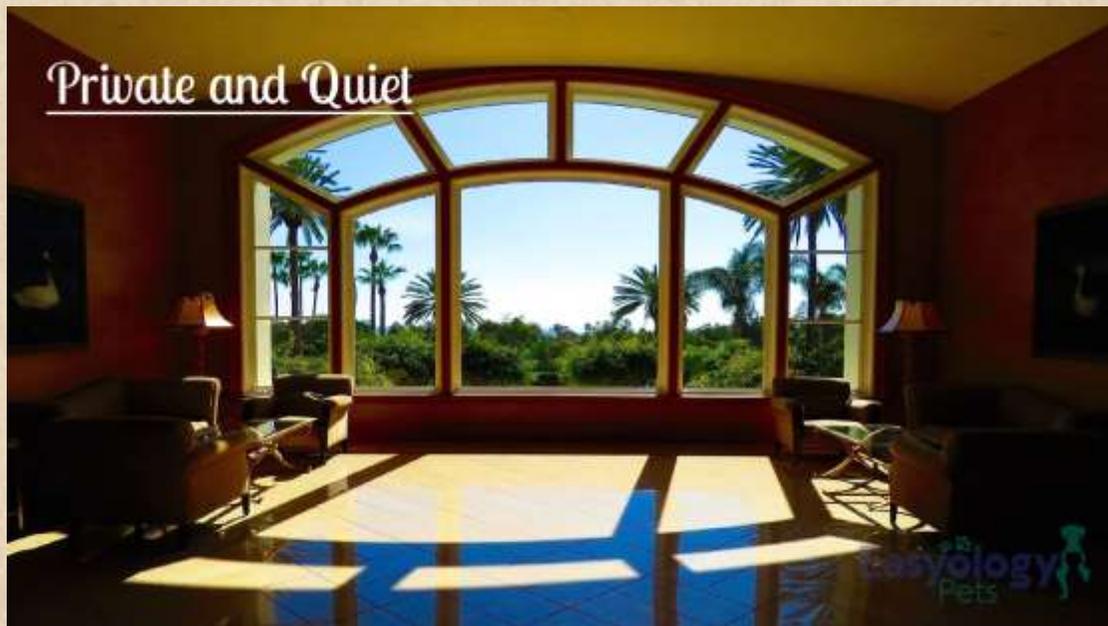
Large Accessible Space

Cats have sharp claws for defending against sneaky attackers, but you have to remember that compared to other predators and us humans, they're teeny tiny (unless you have a Maine Coon of course)! They're still basically a prey, and that fact makes them ultra-wary when nature calls. That's why it's vital to look for a large space for the cat litter box placement.

It can be any room or nook of your house. You just have to make sure that it's wide enough to provide your cat with quick and multiple escape routes; he must have enough time to prepare and escape in case a stranger or other threat approaches. It must also be easily accessible to help your cat use the box without problems regardless of their age and health condition.

Private and Quiet

No matter how social your cat may be, he will still want privacy when doing his bathroom business. Just think about it. Will you be okay with having a door-less bathroom where people can pass by and peek? No, right?!



Kitty thinks so, too, so consider the bathroom or a spare room for the litter box placement. If you're living in an apartment and have a narrow bathroom, then designating a part of your living room to it will do. In open spaces, you can use curtains or dividers to keep the litter box private.

Some people think that the garage, laundry room, and hallways are suitable areas, but cats are easily surprised. The loud sounds of the car engine, washing machine, and

family members can scare them and, consequently, make them want to eliminate elsewhere. So avoid these areas at all costs.

Proper Ventilation

Nobody wants to constantly smell poop, even in the bathroom. Don't make your cat endure the foul smell of his own excrement by keeping the litter box in an enclosed space. As much as possible, place the box in a room with a window or exhaust fan—these two things quickly diffuse and [eliminate cat litter odor](#).

Extra Tips

We're not done yet! When deciding where to place your cat's litter box, you must also consider these things:

- An unobstructed view of the whole room where the box is placed will make your cat feel more confident since he can see everything that goes in and out of the room.
- Don't forget to always keep the door open. Otherwise, your cat might just hold it in and develop various urinary tract diseases.
- Keep the litter box a good few meters away from the feeding area.

Time to Start Cleaning

You got the best litter box and placed it in the best spot in your house. Surely, your feline buddy is happy and all is well.

Until the time you have to start cleaning, that is.

As majestic and clean as cats are, there are still some issues that we, as cat parents, constantly battle. One of those is cat litter spreading and tracking.

The Catastrophe of Litter Spreading and Tracking

Obviously, you can't have a litter box and not have any litter. What else would your cat use to bury her poop?

[Cat litters](#) are available in an array of materials and sizes, but cats' favorite tends to be the fine grain type. This may be because it feels softer and more natural.

However, this type of litter easily gets stuck in kitty's paws and their surrounding fur, especially if he has a longer mane. Consequently, the stuck sand gets dislodged all over the house—on the floor, in dark nooks and crannies, and on your prized furniture.

You generally have three choices when it comes to solving this problem:

Solution 1 - Manic Cleaning

This is the simplest solution. You just have to take out your broom and pan or vacuum several times a day to clean up any mess you might find after your cat went on a bathroom break. However, this is very tiresome and may not be feasible if you are not at home most of the day.



Solution 2 - Cat Litter Box Cover

Alternatively, you can contain the cat litter box. You can do this by creating a makeshift fortress with thick cardboards, changing to a covered litter box (which we don't recommend), or getting intricate cat furniture. All three are easy to accomplish, but all of them also present certain drawbacks.

The cardboard wall may prevent litter from spreading while your feline tries to cover his excrement, but it will barely reduce tracking.

The covered litter box, generally made with plastic, will work better. However, it is prone to trapping odor, if you're unable to clean it often. This will surely turn off your cat and may even push it to do its business somewhere else.

Finally, the cat furniture, specifically the bench type, is the most effective out of the three. Not only does it contain the litter from spreading, but it also offers better ventilation. The only downside is that it is expensive, costing anywhere between \$90 to a whopping \$2000 a piece—an amount that is difficult to just drop, especially if you need several to accommodate your cats.

Kitty Litter Cat Mat



Best Solution 3 - Cat Litter Mat

Cat litter mats are my recommended solution for cat litter spreading and tracking, and it is not only because we are selling them.

An open litter box placed in a key area of your house actually helps build your cat's confidence. This is essential if you want your cat to feel comfortable and, in a way, "own" the house.

Huge mats like the [Easyology Premium Cat Litter Mat](#) allow your cat to do his business without trapping him or burning a hole in your pocket. The size ensures that most, if not all, sand will be caught. Our choice of a fine and modern PVC design also guarantees that your cat will not be bothered by the mat and that any liquid spilled will not seep through.

At the end of the day, all you will need to do is vacuum the collected sand or shake it into a trash bin.

Keeping the Litter Box Squeaky Clean in 5 Easy Steps

Don't do the happy dance yet! Your cleaning duty doesn't end once you have put litter mats in place to collect stray litter. You still have to make sure that your cat's litter box is properly and thoroughly cleaned on a regular basis.

Fortunately, that doesn't take much. You just have to follow this simple process:

Step 1: Wear Gloves and a Mask

Here's a big warning: a horde of bacteria and parasites is calling your cat's litter box their home. They aren't just snugly staying there; they're using it to get to you and your family!

Protect yourself against these invisible enemies by wearing gloves and a mask. The gloves will help keep the dirty litter and its microscopic tenants from directly touching your skin. On the other hand, the mask will prevent you from breathing in excessive ammonia, which cat litter tends to produce.



Step 2: Scoop Cat Litter Daily

This is the easy part. Well, it's easy unless you have ten cats and eleven litter boxes to maintain. Anyway, all you have to do is religiously scoop poop and, if you're using clumping litter, clumped pee.

You will be forgiven if you missed a day of cleaning, but do remember that cats are clean freaks and finicky. Depending on your cat's unique personality and preferences, he may or may not try to hold it in until you get around to cleaning.

This isn't really a threat, but you should think twice before avoiding the litter box cleaning duty because kitty's health rests in your hand.

Step 3: Add Litter Every Two or Three Days

After several days of scooping dirty litter, the sand in the litter box will be running low. Once you notice that it's getting close to around one centimeter in height, it's time to add more.

Actually, you don't really have time to consider whether more litter is needed or not because soon enough, your cat will stop covering his poop completely to will you into cleaning it and pouring extra cat litter. Believe me, if a pile of poop sausages doesn't get you cleaning and adding more litter, I don't know what will.

Step 4: Empty and Wash the Litter Box Every Week

During the weekends, you shouldn't only think of playing and resting but also cleaning—cleaning the cat litter box completely, that is.

For this weekly task, it's essential that you empty the whole box into a trash bin. Don't forget to wear that pair of gloves and mask before doing so. Once all the litter has been dumped, you can start the actual cleaning process using mild, non-scented detergent. Scrub all sides of the box with a sponge or rag and rinse it with warm water. You can

actually add a drop or two of vinegar to the detergent to help kill harmful microorganisms lurking on the box.



Step 5: Sprinkle Baking Soda, Use Charcoal, or Line the Cat Litter Box with a Filter

After thoroughly washing and drying the cat litter box, the last thing to do is to deodorize it. A deodorizer will keep the box smelling fresh and clean longer, which your cat will no doubt appreciate.

You have three basic options when it comes to litter box deodorizers: baking soda, charcoal briquettes, and filters. For baking soda, you just have to sprinkle a tablespoon or two on the box before adding litter.

The same goes for both the [charcoal briquettes and filters](#); just place them on the bottom of the box before putting cat litter to help reduce odor. Alternatively, you can hang them near the box, making sure they're covered enough to prevent kitty from toying and accidentally ingesting bits of them.

What's That Smell?

Congratulations! You made it to the end of our guide.

You now know the best type of litter box, which part of your home you should place it in, and how to keep it and its surrounding areas immaculately clean. For this final chapter, I'll introduce you to the scents that cats love and smells cats hate.

There are two good reasons you should know them:

- It helps you avoid using scents that may continuously irritate or even negatively affect the health of your cat; and
- It gives you options for natural repellents—to keep your cats away from certain things/parts of the house as well as drive away feral visitors that might engage your indoor buddies

Scents Cats Love

Let's start with the scents that make cats feel relaxed and blissful:



Catnip

Well, what did you expect? [Catnip](#) is a favored herb and scent for all things cats. Not only are they offered fresh, but they're also used as stuffing for toys. If you bought a new scratcher and want your cat to go wreck it instead of your precious sofa, then you have to give it a generous sprinkling of catnip.

One thing worth noting is that catnip affects only two out of three cats. So if your cat seemed unaffected by this smell, then you ought to give silver vine or valerian root, both of which are equally popular cat lures, a try.

Bleach and Chlorine

Maybe it's the likeness of these smells to territorial markings or maybe it's just the cats' fondness for anything that smells quite fresh. Whatever it is that bleach and chlorine contains, it easily attracts felines of all shapes and sizes, making them a good tool for occasionally scrubbing the surrounding litter box area.

Just make sure to use it in moderation because as much as they might, they are still chemicals that pose a threat to your cat's health when accidentally ingested.

Shampoo and Perfume

Again, cats' predilection for clean-smelling things may be what makes them go crazy for the smell of shampoo and perfume. Don't use that as an excuse to spray kitty with your favorite cologne, though! And don't even think of using your favorite shampoo on him. The chemicals in them will not be tolerated by your cat's stomach.

However, if you want to use these things to lure your cat, choose ones that are made with more natural ingredients and have a gentle scent.

Smells Cats Hate

Having learned the scents cats like, let's move on to the smells cats hate with a passion, some of which you may actually love:

Citrus

Citrus fruits like lemon, orange, and grapefruit have a very strong scent, which may feel like an assault to cats' sensitive noses. Both their peels and juice can be potent deterrents, although there are a few cats that actually like having a taste of them.



Mint, Wintergreen, and Menthol

These have a more pungent smell (that's the cat talking). With mint, you'd think that being in the same family as catnip will make cats look at it favorably. But no, they don't like it. At all. While they have a cooling effect for us, especially in forms of candy, oil, and liniment, they are deemed abrasive by our cats. A small sniff will make them madly run and hide in a corner until you have properly stored away the source of the foul smell.

They're also toxic when ingested, so my advice for this group is to avoid at all cost. If you rely on them frequently, at the very least, keep them safely stored when not in use.

Rosemary, Rue, Cinnamon, and Lavender

Often used for garden solutions, these herbs and spices are highly disliked by cats. Personally, I'm enamored with lavender, but I have since stopped using it due to two of my three fur babies giving me the stink eye whenever I did. You can use them as fresh plants, dried, or, depending on the plant, oil.

Be wary of using too much lavender, though, if you're thinking of making it a deterrent. In oil form, it becomes toxic and has been known to cause liver damage and fatality. The same goes for cinnamon oil and pretty much all other [essential/aromatic oils](#) you may come across. Rue can be a hit or miss like citrus while rosemary only thrives in warm weathers, so you might have to skip it if you live in a wet and cold area.

Final Words

Cats can be very sweet and loving, but they can also be very fussy, especially when it comes to their litter boxes. This is because they're unable to clean the boxes up like they typically do with their bodies.

And that's where we cat parents come in to help them.

By taking careful consideration of the type of litter box to use, where to place them, how to keep it and its surrounding areas optimally clean, and knowing the scents to use for attracting or prohibiting our feline buddies, we can make our cats healthy and happy while keeping our home clean and smelling fresh.

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