**LITTER BOX RULES**

* Scoop urine and stool from boxes *daily*. Clean box and replace with fresh litter *weekly*.
* Use *unscented* clumping or gravel litter. (Or do trials with different types of litter to check your cat’s preference.)
* Fill box with 3-4 inches deep of litter.
* Number of litter boxes = number of cats in house + 1 (or more…)
* Litter boxes must be in different locations. Try a location where your cat spends the most time, not way down in the basement. If you have many levels, you may need a box at each level.
* Use large litter boxes with no cover versus ones with a cover.
* Make sure litter boxes are in a private area without noise/commotion/dogs. It may be necessary to put a baby gate up to keep dogs/small children away from the litter box.
* Thoroughly clean areas that have been previously soiled by urine or fecal material. Many enzyme solutions are available- (read directions on bottle) area must be rinsed of detergents before applying or the enzymes will be destroyed.
* Distract cat from inappropriate locations: place food, catnip, toys, double sided tape in area. Do not punish cat unless act was done in last 60 seconds.
* Some cats may need a sanctuary where their food, water, litter box, favorite spot to sleep and play area are all together. A baby gate or closed door may be necessary for shy cats. Try 6 hours a day and decide if a day or night time sanctuary is better for stressed cat. Some cats are happier in high places like kitty condos or cat trees which may help to keep them less stressed.
* Try to give your cat daily playtime and brushing in its favorite part of the house.
* Always have a urinalysis done on your cat- at any age! Not all litter box problems are behavioral. A urinalysis will check for an infection, crystal formation, diabetes and kidney disease as well as other problems.

These are guidelines that a feline behaviorist has come up with after studying and scientifically testing responses of cats that have had inappropriate elimination problems. Your cat may respond to some or all of these ideas. Try them, but remember behaviors are often habits and response to change may not be immediate. There may be a gradually decrease in unwanted behaviors over time instead of a quick 100% resolution, especially if the problem has been present for several months or longer. Ask us about Feliway or Comfort Zone Pheromone sprays.

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