

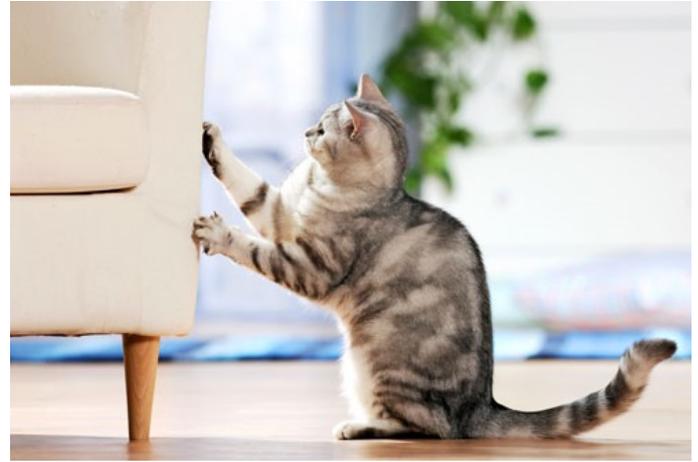
By nature cats tend to be solitary creatures, unlike dogs. Cats can form social groups although one social group may not get on with another. They are territorial and in general are solitary animals but due to their flexible social organisation can tolerate other cats in their territory. The more cats that live with each other though, the more chance fighting between them may occur.

Important Resources

Because cats tend to like to be solitary, it is advisable to treat them individually. This is to help prevent potential behaviour problems, conflict and fighting between cats over their most important resources. It is important to provide each of them with their own most important resources needed to survive and maintain their well-being. These most important resources are food, water, resting areas and litter trays.

Litter Trays

One of the most important resources is the litter tray because cats develop such a strong preference to toileting areas. If you have more than one cat, it is helpful to follow this simple rule on how many litter trays to have in the house: one litter tray per cat plus one more. Therefore, if you have three cats, you will need four litter trays. This prevents any one cat guarding the tray or ambushing another cat whilst using the litter tray. These actions could result in other cats developing potential litter box aversions. Behaviour problems can then manifest themselves in the form of soiling in



inappropriate areas of the house and inappropriate urination and defecation occurring as a result. Provide appropriate sites for the litter boxes: cats prefer a private and quiet place to toilet. Thus, it is not suitable to have a litter tray in a busy area of the house like the kitchen. Possible suggestions of where the litter tray could go are under the stairs; behind furniture or in corners of rooms that do not have high volumes of traffic going through them.

Litter trays should also be placed away from their food; windows; washing machines; tumble dryers and cat flaps or entry points where potential intruders could make them uneasy about using the litter tray. Ensure there is a litter tray on each level of your house and that it is easily accessible. Trays with high side walls should have a piece cut out to make entry and exit easier. Many cats dislike litter trays with hoods as the aroma from their toileting is held underneath the hood, creating an aversive environment that puts them off using it.

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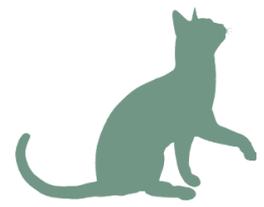
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Ensure the trays are 2 emptied at least once a day and that the litter itself is as close to a sand like texture and possible and ideally 4" deep.

Resting Areas

Your house is your cat's core territory where they need to feel safe and secure. Thus, it is useful to provide them with places that they are able to hide and seek refuge if need be. Cats love high areas to explore and to view their territory. Therefore, providing them with high and comfy places to sleep and watch the world go by will help them feel more secure.

Food

Cats prefer to eat away from other cats, therefore, remember not to put their food bowls next to each other. Place food in different areas of the house and have one more food bowl than necessary, to prevent guarding and possessiveness.

Scratching Posts

In order to help cats to perform their natural behaviour repertoires, it is necessary for them to scratch. Scratching is performed for several reasons: it can be a form of communication to signify the boundaries of that cat's territory, to other cats; allows the cat to perform stretching movements and helps them to sharpen and condition their claws. A scratching post serves these purposes. Ensure the scratching post is next to doors and entry and exit points. Remember the scratching post serves as a mark to the boundary of a cat's territory. Have

as many scratching posts as possible: if the cat does not use it at first, use the cat's scent to rub onto the scratching post (use a cloth to rub against the cat's cheeks where pheromones are produced then rub that same cloth onto the post). Ensure the post is taller than the cat at full stretch.



Toys and Play

Toys, puzzles, games, training and playing with your cat are great ways of making your cat more comfortable in their surroundings. It also provides them with important exercise, stimulation, enrichment and provides interaction between yourself and your cat. Hunting toys help your cat to have an outlet to be able to perform their natural behaviours. Toys on rods are particularly good to use as they mimic prey that the cat can hunt down and catch. Puzzle feeders also help to provide a cat with the ability to perform their natural instincts of hunting for their food, helping with mental stimulation and to decrease the possibility of weight gain, boredom and behaviour problems.

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