
TRAINING YOUR OUTDOOR KITTY TO BE AN INDOOR KITTY . . . AND MAKING BOTH OF YOU SAFER



The average indoor-only cat lives up to three times longer than an outdoor-indoor cat. (See our article about Keeping Your Kitty Indoors.) So, keep your kitty healthy and safe by keeping him or her indoors only.

Some experts think you may be safer, too, if you keep your kitty indoors. In a recent appearance on Animal Wise Radio, Dr. Michael Fox, a syndicated columnist, said that one of the best ways to protect yourself against Avian or Bird Flu might be to keep your cats inside. The most likely way for a cat to contract this disease is through contact with wild birds. It is not known whether cats can transfer the disease to humans, but the intimate nature of the relationship between cats and humans leads some to think it is possible.

Cats can be completely happy inside, and it is relatively easy to train an outdoor cat to become an indoor-only cat. Follow these steps to turn your outdoor kitty into a happy and safer indoor kitty.

STEP ONE: KEEP YOUR KITTY CONFINED AT FIRST

Find a room where the kitty can be comfortable, and confine the kitty to that room. Put food, water and a litter box in the room, placing the litter box as far away from the food & water as you can. Keep the kitty in this room for two weeks. This will firmly establish the room as the cat's territory, and by the end of the two-week period, the kitty should not be trying to bolt out of the room when the door is opened.

STEP TWO: KEEP THE LITTER BOX VERY CLEAN

Outdoor kitties can use a "new" litter box each time they go, so be sure to keep their indoor litter box very clean, by scooping it at least once a day.

STEP THREE: ALLOW SUPERVISED EXCURSIONS

After the two-week confinement period, begin allowing your kitty to have supervised excursions through the rest of the house. At night, when the kitty is not being supervised keep him or her in the confinement room to make sure your kitty does not develop marking behaviors in the house.

STEP FOUR: KEEP THE LITTER BOX IN THE CONFINEMENT ROOM FOR AWHILE

Even after your kitty has unsupervised access to the rest of the house, keep the litter box in the confinement room. If you want to move the litter box, do so gradually. It can be a good idea to put a second litter box in the place you want it to be permanently and keeping the original litter box in place until your kitty starts using the second box. Cat Attract is a good litter to use to draw your kitty to a new box if he or she needs a little extra encouragement.

STEP FIVE: GIVE YOUR KITTY FUN THINGS TO DO INSIDE

Give your kitty toys, play time and, most importantly, lots of love and attention. If their inside life is rich and stimulating, they will be content and happy. As a side benefit, many people who have indoor-only kitties say they have deeper and more satisfying relationships with their cats as a result.

Don't ever let your kitty outside again. Following these steps will make the transition from outdoor to indoor easier for you and your kitty.