

LITTER BOX AND SPRAYING PROBLEMS.



Litter box and Spraying problems can be discouraging and very much frustrating for pet owners, be patient don't despair there is help.

As discouraging and frustrating it may be when cats urinate outside the litter box, pet owners have to remember that pets are for life and no matter how much at your wits ends you are, you need to work with your 4 legged children to remedy the problem.

Re-homing your pet is not going to solve the problem, specially if the problem is a medical one.

After all, there is going to come a time in our lives that we too are going to eliminate where we haven't before, either for medical reasons, because we are just getting old and or not as fast as we use to be at getting to the potty, etc. etc.

First you will need to understand and determine what is causing the problem.

Cats are creatures of habit, usually when a cat does something he has never done before, there is a reason behind it.

This behavior could arise for various reasons and sometimes is a combination of a few of the reason mentioned below.

Please understand that punishment is not the answer, and, in fact, punishment can make the situation worse.

The first thing to do is to rule out any medical problems. There is not getting around this one, a trip to the vet should be scheduled.

Urinary tract Infections, crystals, bladder infections, kidney infections and stones. (Medical)

Do not delay in taking your cat to the vet if he or she is showing any of the symptoms below in combination with not using the litter box.

Poor appetite, lethargy, frequent urination, straining, blood in the urine, eliminating on bedding, furniture, tile, etc.

Taking your cat to the vet is a must especially if you have a male cat.

Do not delay even for a day, the sooner you can get your cat to see a vet the better.

Urinary tract infections, crystals and stones are considered a life-threatening emergency in male cats, as their urethras are so long, they can become blocked. and the cat can die.

Do not wait to see if your cat will be better in the morning, as morning could be too late! When a cat has a UTI they strain to urinate, it is very painful, and the burning sensation is unbearable.

Any human that has suffered a UTI in their lives can certainly relate to what a cat feels, as the pain and burning sensations is just the same we humans experience.

The difference is that we humans can call the doctor and get on medication right away, while our animals depend on us to get them better, therefor It is our responsibility to recognize symptoms and get them help.

A cat doesn't understand why this is happening, the cat is not peeing all over the place just because, what the cat understands is that every time he or she goes to use the potty, it hurts like heck and it burns, therefor they associate the burning and pain with the litter box.

In this case many times because of the burning they seek cool places to urinate such as tile.

UTI's are generally treated and clear up with antibiotics, however if your cat has crystals or stones it may require immediate surgery.

Tip: In order to prevent UTI's it is recommended to NOT feed your cat any food containing fish. Feeding high quality food, even though expensive, certainly always cuts on medical bills.

Bladder stones, depending on type, can sometimes be dissolved with diet, but not always.

If the cause is medical, the cat will resume using the litter box full time once the illness is addressed.

When it is just a behavior problem it is not always the cat's fault!

Many times when this behavior arises we blame the cat's.

Sometimes it is the cat's fault, but many times it is not and it is really the human parents.

We need to learn to listen to the silent language of our animals.

So let's see who is to blame.

Litter boxes: location, size, dirty, etc. (Human Fault)

Cats like their litter boxes to be immaculate, therefore ideally litter boxes should be cleaned when ever possible twice a day, or at the very least, once a day.

Think about it, would you go potty in a dirty and smelly bathroom?

A dirty litter box will certainly deter the cat from using it, specially if the litter box has a cover.

Putting a litter box in an area where there is a lot of foot traffic from humans and other pets can easily deter a cat from using it.

Place litter boxes in a quiet area in the house, such as a spare bathroom, laundry room, spare bedroom, etc.

Note: Please keep litter boxes as far away as possible from the cat food , water bowls and sleeping quarters.

The size of the litter box is also important, the bigger the pan the more comfortable for the cat to go potty.

If you have a medium size cat and a litter box that only a kitten can fit in, it will make your cat very uncomfortable, and could easily cause it to go outside of it.

Make sure you get a large enough litter box so your cat will have plenty of room to do his/her business.

If your cat is elderly or getting up in age, it may be difficult for him or her to climb into it.

Getting a box that is lower or that has a ramp may solve the problem.

The number of litter boxes can be very important.

Rule of thumb is that you should have one litter box per cat in the household, plus one. In households with larger cat populations, this is not always practical, which makes daily cleanings even more important.

Covered vs. uncovered litter boxes (Human Fault, it is not always what looks good and what we want).

Your best bet is to have one of each or a few of each if you have more than two.

Some cats like going into a very private potty, while others don't like being confined.

Some cats like going #2 in one box and # 1 (ed note: i'd use the real terms, we're all adults here!) in another so having more than one in the house and one of each kind could solve the problem.

Type of litters. again It is not always what you like - (Human Fault)

Litters with a perfume or antiseptic smell may discourage some cats from using the litter box.

Trying different types of litter including newspaper, and yes i mean one with "no litter" at all are things that could be helpful, for elderly cats or cats that prefer to eliminate in soft places such as blankets, puppy pads sold at the pet store could work too.

HPR does NOT recommend the use of clumping litter.

HPR recommends Feline Pine which are pine wood pellets, however just for this purpose of resolving inappropriate elimination issues, you may want to try the various types of clay litter and see if that will solve the problem.

To find out the reason of why we do not recommend clumping litter, please click on the link below:
<http://members.petfinder.org/~FL584/IS%20YOUR%20CAT%20LITTER%20KILLING%20YOUR%20PET%20&%20YOU.pdf>

Stress (Human Fault)

Stress can be a major cause of inappropriate elimination in cats. Cats are creatures of habit, therefore they do not accept change very well.

That said anything out of the ordinary and out of their routine can be a cause of inappropriate elimination.

Changes in routine could include: moving to a new home, holidays, a new baby, a new partner, a new cat, a new dog, guests, a vacation for the cat's owners, a divorce, all of the above can be very stressful, distressful and very upsetting for a cat resulting in inappropriate elimination.

Keeping stress levels to a minimum on the household will benefit the cat and you.

Planning ahead and taking measures to help a cat adjust to life changes can help a cat deal with life changes.

There is a product called 'Feliway' which was designed to help reduce anxiety in cats, and thus may decrease spraying or urinating inappropriately. Feliway contains pheromones from the cat's face. Pheromones are chemicals which are used to communicate with other members of the same species. You may notice your cat rubs her face and chin on vertical surfaces. She is leaving a scent there which contains these pheromones.

The pheromones from the face have a calming effect on other cats. When Feliway is sprayed onto multiple vertical surfaces where your cat may spray, the cat receives this calming signal, and in many cases, spraying will be reduced.

Feliway is also available in a plug-in diffuser, for use in the area where the cat spends most of her time.

We also recommend the use of Rescue Remedy, which is a natural stress reliever and can be purchased at most health food stores.

A Male Cat is Marking or a Female Cat is in Heat (Human Fault- spay and neuter your pet).

Urine is used in the cat world to leave messages to other cats to communicate dominance, to mark territory and to show a female's willingness to mate. Intact males and un-spayed females may urinate outside the litter box - often in the form of a small "spray" for males or "mark" in the case of females. Hormones are the trigger for this troublesome behavior, which is usually remedied by spaying and neutering your pet.

A cat that has been declawed (Human Fault you should never amputate an animal).

Declawing is a procedure where the first knuckle of the cat's paw is amputated, it is not just taking the claw out. It is exactly as if somebody was to cut an inch of your fingers off with your ligaments, tendons and everything in between.

Just imagine the pain!

Many cats that have been declawed stop using the litter box because the pain on their paws is just excruciating.

Laundry

People that live in condos, rental communities or do their laundry in public laundry mats, this could also contribute to inappropriate elimination of our residents felines.

The reason being is because cats can pick up smells from very far that we humans cannot even dream of smelling.

Your cat may be picking up the smells from other pets in your condo so the use Feliway spray in the house and on your cloths after bringing them from the laundry room into your house is recommended.

In sum and possible solutions.

#Have your cat checked by your veterinarian for a possible medical condition.

#If you have multiple cats and do not know which one is the culprit, your vet can prescribe you a fluorescent dye to feed the cats (do it one cat a time).

The urine from that cat will fluoresce when exposed to a black light.

#Place numerous litter boxes around the house, rule of thumb is the number of cats + one more.

#Try a larger litter box, such as a kids plastic swimming pool or a sweater storage large box; some behaviorists feel litter boxes are often too small.

#Use different substrates including newspaper, clumping litter, non-clumping litter,

sawdust (not cedar), newspaper and no litter at all.

Use unscented litter, since many cats do not like the scented kind.

#If you find a litter or whatever is that your cat prefers, stick with it for a while (even if it is not the material or litter that you prefer) and slowly convert the cat back to litter. Place a small amount of litter on top of what your cat likes, start with a small amount and gradually increase it.

If all goes the first week, use more litter each week until you can finally remove whatever you're using, if for example you are using newspaper then put a small amount of litter on the newspaper and increase the amount everyday.

#Clean any soiled areas with an enzyme cleaner designed for use on pet urine and stool.

Never pour bleach on cat urine!

Bleach and ammonia mixed together are incredibly toxic for people and animals.

Cat urine contains ammonia!

#Clean litter boxes at least once a day and wash it at least weekly with a mild detergent, never use strong smelling disinfectant products to clean the litter box, always rinse well.

#The use of scat mats is great to access to the area where your cat is inappropriately urinating.

#Try Feliway or Rescue Remedy (never use rescue remedy in pill, always liquid) or both in combination as described above.

#You can also confine your cat to a cage or small bathroom and re-train him/her to go to the litter box/Cat Attract litter is very helpful in this case.

#Praise your cat if and when he/she uses the box.

#Do NOT punish the cat.

Punishing the cat, including rubbing her nose in the soiled area will make matters worse.

#If elimination outside the litter box started after a new partner moved in with you or per say you got married.

If the cat is urinating on your partner's clothes.

Always trust the nose of your cat and never re-home your cat because of a new partner.

Just remember that your cat will be with you forever, that he or she will give you unconditional love no matter what.

However your partner maybe here today but tomorrow he or she may be gone!

#And last but not least your cat may be marking because of you.

Meaning that you may be invading his or her space, if you discover this is the case. Giving the cat its own room in the house will be a great idea.

#Patient, patient and more patience is the key!

And please always remember that taking your beloved pet to a shelter is not an option,

reality is that owner surrendered pets at shelters are killed right away.

At least stray animals have a 3 to 5 day hold by law, in case the pet is claimed by the owner.

Owner surrender pets do not have that privilege, specially an owner surrendered cat that urinates outside the litter box.

Giving your pet “free to good home”, it is also not an option, free to good home pets usually end up in a research lab or used as bait for dog fights.

Do not let this happen to your pet, as hard as it may be please give your beloved pet a chance and work through the problem and again be patient.

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www.HurricanePetsRescue.org

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