

# 5 Steps to Creating a Cat-Friendly Home



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### 1. Expand your cat's world: Create vertical space

The creation of vertical space is life-changing for cats. It makes their world larger. It makes it easier for cats in a multi-cat household to get along, as it helps create enough space/ assets to go around. And it lets them survey their world from a place where they feel confident, up high. It also encourages exercise, which is lacking for many cats, by giving them a reason to jump. There are attractive ways to create vertical space for your cats: gorgeous cat trees, cat shelves, and the connection of these vertical spaces to create "cat superhighways."

### 2. Give your cat a way to "hide" in plain sight

Block off hiding spots that are out of the way (like under beds and furniture), and create hiding spots in the middle of the action. Provide a spot for your cat to disappear in plain sight, where they can still be a part of family life. If your cat is able to "hide" by crawling into an igloo/ cave/ hidey bed in the living room, as opposed to retreating to a spot under the bed, you'll be helping a nervous or scared cat build confidence as well as integrate with the family.

### 3. Offer a room with a view

Cats love to look out windows. Create a lookout point for your cat with a window perch, cat tree, or an appropriately situated shelf or bookcase. But be aware that the presence of neighborhood cats can upset some indoor cats. If there are outdoor cats in plain sight, you will want to create "Cat TV" in another window or in other ways, such as with fish tanks or videos of prey animals, like mice and birds.

### 4. The clean multi-bathroom home

We recommend the "plus one" rule. When determining how many litter boxes you need, count the number of cats you have, and add one; if you have two cats, you'll want three litter boxes, situated in locations with social significance to your cats. Unfortunately, your cats would like their litter boxes placed where you spend most of your time. We understand that you might not want a litter box in your living room, but perhaps you can compromise: If your cats spend a lot of time by certain windows or doors, place the litter boxes in these spots, or in the bathroom that you use. And be sure to scoop that litter twice a day to prevent litter box avoidance!

### 5. Place scratching posts where your cat wants them

There are several reasons your cat may choose the sofa or your bedroom carpet for scratching. They are important locations to your cat, and mark key territory. You spend a lot of time in these two locations, and your cat wants to leave their mark to indicate their co-ownership. Instead of tucking away scratching posts where you'd like them, place them in these spots (or wherever else your cat seems to want to scratch). Make sure the scratching posts you choose are sturdy, and provide a variety of scratching positions – horizontal, vertical, and inclined, and a variety of materials - sisal and cardboard. Cats aren't just making their mark when scratching, but are also stretching their back muscles and removing the outer nail sheath.

# How To Be The Best Cat Parent You Can Be



## 1. Feed a species-appropriate diet

Nutrition is the foundation for good health for cats and humans. Cats are obligate carnivores, and they need meat to thrive. A raw or grain-free canned diet is best. Your cats will thank you for it.

## 2. Regular veterinary check-ups

The American Association of Feline Practitioners recommends a minimum of annual wellness examinations for all cats. Semi-annual wellness exams may be indicated for older cats and cats with recurring health problems. Changes in health status may occur in a short period of time, and by the time cats show symptoms, a disease may already be progressed to a stage where treatment will be more complicated and more expensive.

## 3. Enrich your cat's environment

At their core, cats are still wild animals, and while we've invited them into our homes to share our lives, we can't expect them to completely give up all their instincts. We have to look at our living space from the cat's point of view and provide an environment that keeps them stimulated. When cats' needs are not met, they will be stressed, and this stress will often demonstrate itself in behavior issues such as inappropriate elimination, scratching, and aggression toward other cats and even the humans in the household. Accommodating cats' needs is critical to ensuring that they are happy and healthy.

## 4. Keep your cat's teeth healthy

Dental disease is the most frequently diagnosed health problem for cats, and, if left untreated, can lead to serious health problems including heart, kidney and liver disease. The best way to prevent dental disease is through brushing your cat's teeth, and it's not as hard as you may think to get a cat used to regular brushing.

## 5. Consider getting pet insurance

Could you easily afford to pay \$1000 to \$3000 if your cat had a sudden medical emergency? Could you cover the cost of a prolonged illness, which can easily run into several thousand dollars? Can you easily cover your cat's annual or bi-annual exam, preventive lab work, and dental cleaning? If you're uncertain, please consider pet insurance.

## 6. Learn as much as you can about cat health

The more you know about feline health, the better off your cat will be. Your cat's veterinarian is your most important source of health information, but don't be afraid to ask us questions too!