

10 Tips to Keep Your Cat Happy Indoors

It's cold outside. Help your kitty discover the great indoors.

It's a myth that going outside is a requirement for feline happiness. Playing regularly with a cat and providing her entertaining toys can easily satisfy her stalking instinct, keep her stimulated, and provide the exercise she needs to stay healthy and happy. It also keeps local wildlife safe!

Here are some tips for making the great indoors an interesting, feline-friendly environment that meets all of your cat's needs.

Start 'em young



Kittens who are kept indoors are usually happy to stay there as they grow up.

Good fences = happy kitties

Provide a screened porch for your cat to experience the outdoors safely. Consider building or purchasing a "catio" or similar enclosure to allow your cat to get a taste of the outside without the risks. A regular fence may not prevent other animals from entering your yard, so you should always be present when you allow your cat outside in your yard.

Be sure to cat-proof the yard by checking that your fence has no escape routes and by making toxic plants, garden chemicals and other dangerous objects inaccessible.

Walking cat on a harness is not recommended. Then you will always have to walk them and if the day comes when you cannot, you are setting yourself up for misbehavior - like scratching the door and door trim or inappropriate peeing.

Hang out

Install a perch indoors near a sunny window; padded perches can be purchased at many pet supply stores, through catalog retailers, or at our online store. Another option is an enclosure that sits in a window frame (much like an air conditioning unit) and provides a secure space in which your kitty can hang out. Larger perches can attach to the side of a house or ground-floor apartment patio.

Tree's company

Buy a ready-made cat tree (often called a "kitty condo") or make your own. A cat tree can be short or may stretch from floor to ceiling. It provides great climbing opportunities and, in multi-cat households, creates more play and rest areas by taking advantage of vertical space. If you can, locate the cat tree next to a window so your cat can watch the action outdoors.

Play time

Play with your cat each day. Try different types of toys that allow your cat to stalk, chase, pounce, and kick. When you've tired-out your cat, store toys that could harm him (such as toys with strings attached) out of reach. When you can't be there to supervise, leave out "toys" such as paper bags (with the handles removed) or cardboard boxes. Be sure to switch the toys from time to time so that they seem "new" and more interesting to your cat.

Bring the outdoors in

Plant cat grass (available from pet supply stores) in indoor pots so your feline can graze.

Clean house

Cats can be neat freaks, so clean the litter box regularly.

ID, please

Even indoor cats should still be outfitted with a collar and visible identification. The occasional open window (make sure your windows have secure screens) or door offers a tempting opportunity for your cat. In addition, your cat may become frightened and make her way outside if strangers come to work on your house or if there is a fire or similar disaster. The collar and visible ID could help someone get your pet back to you. The collar should be a “break-away” collar so it does not choke your cat if she gets caught on something.

Chip in for safety

For extra insurance, consider having your cat microchipped and keep your contact information with the microchip registry up-to-date. If you do lose your cat, contact your local animal shelter immediately to file a report. Shelter workers can give you tips on getting your pet back home safely.