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How to litter train a cat and why it's never too late



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Are you wondering how to litter train an adult cat, and maybe even worrying it could be hard to teach them if they didn't pick it up as a kitten? Well, if so, you can rest assured that it's entirely possible. You go about the process in much the same way that you would litter train a kitten. The only difference? It may take a little longer. We all learn a bit more quickly when we're young!

## Before you start training an older cat to use the litter tray

It's a good idea to set yourself up for success before your cat even sets a paw in the litter tray. Here's how:

### Get the right litter

Cats are, let's face it, picky and if they don't like the litter you've chosen for them, they might well just refuse to use it! Which litter they like comes down to individual preference and past experience, with some cats preferring a non-clumping litter and others deciding it's clumping or nothing. Our [Complete guide to choosing the best cat litter for you and your cat](#) will help you make the right selection.

### Get the right litter box in the right place

As well as getting the litter itself right, it's important to choose a litter box your cat is happy

with and position it well. In terms of the former, bear in mind that many cats don't like covered litter boxes (because they can't see any potential 'threats') and an older cat could struggle to get in and out of a box with high sides. As for position, you're looking for a quiet, low traffic spot where your cat won't be disturbed. [Where to put a cat litter box: the dos and don'ts](#) is packed with helpful advice.

## **Make sure you have enough litter boxes**

Our experts at the Waltham Petcare Science Institute recommend you have one litter box for every cat in your household plus one more. However, if your cat is getting on a bit, it might be worth having additional litter boxes around, especially if they are a bit restricted in their movement. You want to do everything you can to remove the 'hassle factor'.

## **Remember your cat will expect you to scoop often**

Cats are known for having high standards when it comes to cleanliness, so prepare yourself to keep litter boxes, well, box fresh!

## **How to litter train your cat**

Ready to start training? Here's what you need to do:

### **Introduce your cat to the litter box**

The first thing you need to do is introduce your furry friend to the litter box by encouraging them in it or near to it and allowing them to dig if they want to. It's also a good idea to do this after naps or eating and drinking as these are all times your cat is most likely to need the toilet.

### **Help your cat to make the 'right' choice**

As well as showing your cat their litter box, it may be a good idea to confine them to a restricted area of the house and place their litter boxes there. You can always give your furry friend an 'access all areas' pass once they've got the hang of litter training.

### **Reward good behaviour**

When your cat successfully uses the litter tray, you need to reward them with lavish, but calm, praise and a treat. This gives them the message it's behaviour worth repeating!

### **Why punishment is a bad idea**

By contrast, punishing or scolding a cat isn't recommended. Not only will it not work but it could even make your cat afraid of their litter tray or, worse still, you.

### **Dealing with accidents**

Instead, deal with the inevitable accidents calmly, using an enzymatic cleaner to get rid of the smell. This isn't just a matter of housekeeping because if your cat can still detect the scent of their own urine in an area, that encourages them to pee there again.

## How long does it take to litter train a cat?

Your cat is a unique individual so it's impossible to say exactly how long they will take to get the hang of using a litter box. However, if you get the basics right (the right litter and litter box in the right position) and patiently and consistently use positive reinforcement training, your cat could well become a litter box pro within 4 - 6 weeks.

## What to do if your cat won't use the tray

There are many reasons why a cat might avoid their litter tray. It might be because they don't approve of where you've placed their litter box, and sometimes it's because there's a health concern. [Help, my cat is refusing to use the litter tray](#) will point you in the right direction but, if you're worried, have a chat with your vet.

[Don't miss A complete guide to choosing the best cat litter for you and your cat.](#)



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