

HOME
- IS THEIR -
SAFE
PLACE

Creating the perfect indoor haven for your cat

Did you know cats can thrive indoors and live long, healthy lives by your side? Here's how to create a stimulating environment that keeps them happy and safe.

Cat toys

Cats have strong natural hunting instincts and toys that help them replicate prey through sound, movement and different textures can engage these instincts, encouraging your cat to stalk, pounce and catch, providing both mental and physical stimulation.

Besides buying toys from stores, you can make simple and cost-effective toys at home, such as:

- crumpled paper balls
- toilet paper tubes
- paper-filled cotton socks.

Rotating between a variety of safe, stimulating toys will help keep your cat happy.

Cats enjoy playing with people for **5-10 minutes** at a time.





Scratching posts

Scratching is a natural behaviour for cats, driven by several instincts. They use scratching to sharpen their claws, stretch their muscles and relieve stress. Additionally, cats have scent glands in their paws, and scratching is a way for them to mark their territory.

To discourage your cat from scratching your furniture, offer a variety of scratching surfaces, both horizontal and vertical. Adding a sprinkle of catnip can further entice them to use these posts and surfaces.



Cat comfort zones

Cats are territorial creatures and need their own personal space, especially in multi-cat homes, to help prevent aggression. **Cats enjoy sleeping in cozy spots, so provide hideaways like empty cardboard boxes or other enclosed spaces for privacy and security.**

Offer elevated places like shelves, window ledges and the tops of furniture. These can provide sunshine, fresh air, a sense of security, enrichment, and allow them to observe their surroundings.



Social needs and playtime

Cats enjoy spending time with people, but on their own terms. **Short (5-10 minutes), positive interactions work best.** Some cats prefer just being in the room, while others love playtime, cuddles, or brushing. Letting your cat take the lead builds trust and strengthens your bond.

While not essential, safe outdoor access can be provided through outdoor enclosures, escape-proof fencing or short supervised backyard strolls to allow for outdoor sights, smells and sounds.





Food and water

Cats don't like to eat or drink near their litter box. Keep their food and water bowls in a separate location, with some space between them as well.

Feed cats small amounts frequently.

To stimulate your cat's natural instincts, avoid a bowl and consider food toys, puzzles or scatter feeding.

Scattering kibble across the floor and their scratching platforms encourages exploration and slows feeding, which encourages digestion, exploration and reduces the chances of vomiting caused by eating too quickly.

Many common household items can be toxic or dangerous for cats so it's essential to keep them secure or out of reach. **Hazardous items include lilies, chocolate, citrus, cooked bones, onions, garlic, grapes, alcohol, avocado, coffee, and dairy products.** Other dangers include chewing on electrical cords and ingesting human medications, insecticides, and cleaning products.



Litter boxes

Each cat should have their own litter box in a quiet, private and accessible spot. The litter box should be large enough for the cat to turn around and squat, and deep enough for your cat to dig and cover their waste.

Cats like to keep clean and will avoid dirty litter boxes. Scoop the tray daily and wash it regularly.

If you are pregnant, have someone else empty or clean the litter box for you to minimise the risk of toxoplasmosis, a rare disease found in cat faeces that can be harmful to unborn babies.

Food toys, puzzles or scatter feeding can stimulate your cat's natural instincts.



Further information

For more creative ideas on how to keep your cat happy at home, check out:

Animal Welfare Victoria's webpages at www.animalwelfare.vic.gov.au

RSPCA Australia's Keeping your cat safe and happy at home guide (www.safeandhappycats.com.au)

RSPCA Victoria and Zoos Victoria's Safe Cat, Safe Wildlife 'Cat Hacks' (www.safecat.org.au)

RSPCA NSW's Keeping Cats Safe at Home- Cat Lovers' resources. (www.rspcansw.org.au/keeping-cats-safe/cat-lovers-2/)



Make simple cat toys at home.

HOME
- IS THEIR -
SAFE PLACE

Make your cat's home **full of adventures**. Help your cat enjoy a life of fun activities **away from danger**.



Visit our website to learn more
animalwelfare.vic.gov.au

© The State of Victoria Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action February 2025.

Creative Commons

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International licence, visit the Creative Commons website (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

You are free to re-use the work under that licence, on the condition that you credit the State of Victoria as author. The licence does not apply to any images, photographs or branding, including the Victorian Coat of Arms, and the Victorian Government and Department logos.

ISBN 978-1-76176-073-0 (pdf)

Disclaimer

This publication may be of assistance to you but the State of Victoria and its employees do not guarantee that the publication is without flaw of any kind or is wholly appropriate for your particular purposes and therefore disclaims all liability for any error, loss or other consequence which may arise from you relying on any information in this publication.

Accessibility

To receive this document in an alternative format, phone the Customer Service Centre on 136 186, email customer.service@delwp.vic.gov.au, or contact National Relay Service on 133 677. Available at DEECA website (www.deeca.vic.gov.au).