



**HOME**  
- IS THEIR -  
**SAFE**  
**PLACE**

# Keeping your cat safe at home

Cats have a natural instinct to hunt and to explore the outdoors. However, letting your cat roam freely can be dangerous. This guide will explain the benefits of keeping your cat indoors and offer tips to help keep them safe and happy.

## Why cats are safer indoors

Letting your cat roam the neighbourhood is extremely dangerous. Surveys show that two out of three cat owners have permanently lost a cat to roaming incidents. Outdoor cats face a variety of threats, including injury from cars, fights with other animals, poisoning and getting lost.

They can also harm wildlife, annoy neighbours, and catch and spread diseases.

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## Benefits of keeping your cat indoors

### Safety

Protects your cat from getting lost, injured or killed.

### Longer, healthier life

Indoor cats live up to **3 times longer** than their roaming counterparts and have less exposure to parasites and diseases.

### Better reputation for cats

Indoor cats can't bother neighbours or harm wildlife.

### Reduced shelter intake

Fewer roaming cats means fewer strays in shelters and unwanted breeding and cat litters.



## Helping your cat adjust to indoor living

### Be patient

Cats can take a while to adjust to staying inside, it might take a month or more.

### Start slowly

The more slowly you introduce the change, the easier it will be on them. Start by keeping them inside at night and slowly add more indoor time each day.

### Good timing

Here are some specific times that might be easier for your cat to adjust:

- When you first bring them home (kitten or adult)
- After moving to a new place (keeps them safe from an unfamiliar place)
- During feeding time (gradually extend the time they spend inside after feeding them indoors)
- During cold weather (they'll probably want to be warm with you anyway)



## Keeping your indoor cat happy

### Provide essentials

Food, water, warm bedding, litter box and human interaction.

### Prevent boredom

Offer toys, scratch posts/surfaces and climbing structures to keep your cat stimulated.





# Create a safer outdoor space

Some cat owners may want their indoor cat to also have some outdoor time. Here are a few safer options:

## Cat enclosures

A safe, enclosed outdoor space for your cat to explore. You can buy or build your own enclosure, either freestanding or connected to your house. Escape-proof mesh can be used to modify an existing pergola, patio, or narrow pathway. Make sure the enclosure has a cozy sleeping area sheltered from the weather, a scratching post, places for your cat to play, various viewing platforms, and separate hiding spots if you have multiple cats.

## Escape-proof fencing

This allows your cat more freedom in your backyard but keeps them from roaming the neighbourhood. Escape-proof fencing is ideal for small yards and narrow spaces. You can make existing fencing escape-proof with inward-facing netting or rollers that stop cats from grabbing hold of the top of the fence.

A wide, smooth metal or plastic collar may need to be placed around tree trunks near the boundary to prevent cats using these trees to escape. The tree collars should be placed at **least 2m** off the ground.

If possible, you can provide access to your house through a cat flap or window for the above options.

## Supervised walks

If none of the above is possible, short, supervised walks in the backyard are another possible option for cats that don't automatically try and escape. Some cats can be trained to walk on a harness; however, this is not possible for all cats.

## Apartment balconies

Use escape-proof netting to create a safe outdoor space.

Escape-proof mesh can be used to modify an **existing** pergola, patio, or narrow pathway.



# Join the safe cat movement.

Many Victorians are already making the responsible choice to keep their cats contained to their property. By joining them, you're not only keeping your cat safe, but also contributing to a healthier and safer environment for local wildlife.

**Make the switch to an indoor lifestyle for your cat. They'll thank you for it!**

## Additional resources

For more information on building enclosures or cat-proof fencing, visit [animalwelfare.vic.gov.au](http://animalwelfare.vic.gov.au)

Indoor cats  
live up to  
**3x longer.**

The safest place for your new cat  
is **contained on your property.**  
Find out how to set up **fun spaces**  
indoors and outside.

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