

# How to Train Kittens to Use a Litter Box

## Kitten Litter Training

Training your kitten to use a cat litter box requires the same gentleness and patience required to train kitties to do anything. Since cats naturally enjoy playing in dirt and similar movable substances, they instinctively develop relationships with cat litter which aids in the litter box training process.

Although cats are very independent and often require a little more swaying than some other animals do, their tendency to be responsive to the human voice and stroking can help with the process. Therefore, talking to and petting your kitten can suffice as indispensable training tools. When training your kitten you should use these tools generously.

How to actually go about training your kitten depends on its age and what kind of lifestyle you have in store for it. For example, if you intend for the kitten to grow into an indoor cat you must teach it to always use a litter box in the house. If your kitten is to grow into an indoor outdoor cat, however, you might want to teach it to use the litter box while it is young, but switch to an outdoor relief system as it grows older. In case of the later, you must teach the kitty to summon you when necessary to open a door to let it outside.

Overall, teaching a cat to use a litter box is really as simple as preparing the box, placing it in an easy to access area, in as private a location as you can manage, and introducing the kitten to the box. Introducing the kitten to the box is merely a matter of placing the kitten in the box.

Most kittens will begin to explore litter by smelling, pawing, and digging it on their own. Other kittens may require a bit of coaxing. To coax a kitten to dig at the litter, gently hold its front paws and move them around in the litter the way cats do the same when unassisted.

At first, kittens, particularly very young ones, may get the idea the litter is something to play with. This is normal and should not be of concern. When playing with litter, kittens are merely developing a relationship with it. If they do not instinctively use the litter for its intended purpose, they will eventually grasp the idea even if you have to place it them the box after intercepting them while going on the floor. For this reason, it is a good idea to keep kittens in rooms with floors that can easily be mopped up until they have the hang of using the litter box.

Cats, even kittens, usually take to litter boxes pretty quickly. So if your kitten is having a problem, or you cannot seem to get it to cooperate after a day or two, it may not like the type of litter you've selected. Although we humans may want to use a particular kind of litter for our own personal reasons, it is important to remember the kittens are the ones required to use the cat box.

If an owner fills a cat box with crystal litter or pellets for a kitten that does not like those litter types, the owner may find that the kitten will not take to using the litter box. This is why choosing the right kind of litter is vital to successful litter box training. Choosing the wrong litter could cause an owner to think their kitty is non-cooperative. It is best to experiment with different litters if a problem ensues. So if the kitten would fare better with sandy clay than crystals their human wants them to use, then the human just might be the one needing the training!

Cats enjoy privacy so whenever possible, place the litter box in a private area.

If you really would prefer a litter type, because of its smell reducing benefits, or ability to cling, you could experiment with different types until you find one your kitten likes; and then, after the kitten learns to use the box, try to ease it into using your preferred litter type. Do this by mixing small amounts of your preferred litter with the kittens preferred litter. Add a little more of your preference as you clean or change the litter box until your preference is all you must use. Another thing to consider is that the kitten may have sensitive paws that ache while digging heavy litter. Check their paws if digging seems problematic.

As stated above, if you intend your cat to be an indoor/outdoor cat and you do not want to continue keeping a litter box in your home, you must train the cat to relieve itself outdoors. To do this, begin letting the kitten out when you believe it's old enough to explore – about six months. Allow the kitten to go in and out on whatever schedule you choose. After the kitten becomes comfortable going outside, move the litter box outside the door your kitten uses to enter and exit the house. Show the kitten where the box is. Some kittens will immediately begin relieving themselves outdoors when given the freedom to do so. Other will need a little coaxing. So what you must do now is watch to see if the kitten is relieving itself in the yard and if not make certain you know it has used the box prior to letting it back in the house.

Either way, you'll have to let the kitten out every four hours or so to make certain it is going outside of your home. After a few weeks or so, you should be able to put that cat box away; and within the year you should be able to let your cat in and out at its request without worrying about its bathroom habits.

As stated above, there are many things for which kittens may be trained to do. They truly are not as un-trainable as the widespread myth suggests. Non believers should watch some of

the many cat commercials that show the swanky felines boasting their intelligence. If these non believers watch with open minds, they'll see how wrong they "used to be".

And for those of us who already know better, just remember to train your cat or kitten with love and affection. They have minds of their own and are not in the habit of being followers.