

~ Basics of the Loo Where Your Kitties Pee & Poo ~

~ Do you hesitate, maybe cringe & think twice about using one of these even though you might be terribly desperate for an available loo? Your preference, of course, would be a clean toilet & one where everyone flushes after each use, right?



(photo credit Tracy Coulter)

~ Well then, imagine how your cat might feel if they are faced with having to use an unkempt, unsanitary, & unhealthy loo like the aforementioned porta-john!



(photo credit Tracy Coulter)

Odors play a HUGE role in a cat's behavior. **Cats have 200 million scent receptors vs the 5 million that humans have.** By nature, cats are habitually clean creatures so it should go without saying that they prefer the areas they use often to be equally as clean & this includes their toilet!

About the Litter Box:

- The **litter box should be much bigger than your cat.** Kitty should be able to step inside, turn around, scratch & squat without any part of him/her touching any of the sides.
- In my experience **cats seem to prefer an uncovered litter box** vs a covered one.

Covered litter boxes.....

- Can reduce/restrict the room your cat has to move around in the box.
- Can make kitty feel trapped, especially if a resident kitty happens to come by & corners them.
- Can hold in smells making it unpleasant for kitty to use it again (remember, cats have 200 million scent receptors & odors play a huge role in a cat's behavior).
- The rule of thumb is **1 litter box per cat plus 1 additional box.** For example:
 - A 3 cat household should have at least 4 average sized litter boxes total.
 - A single cat household can probably get away with just one litter box, but make sure it is a large box & one that is scooped twice per day.

About the Litter:

- While you may like to use "scented" cat litter because it smells pretty or (temporarily) covers up the smell of the litter box, remember, **odors play a huge role in a cat's behavior.** Scented cat litter can be too strong for kitty & may actually make him/her **not** want to use that box.
- Most cats will use the clumping litter just fine, but we understand that there are other choices (i.e. pellets) & sometimes other material might need to be used due to certain

special needs of kitty (i.e. CH kitties might prefer pellets, newspaper, piddle pads, etc. & are also better for hygiene purposes if they tend to fall over or lay down in the litter box).

- There should be enough litter in the box (2-3 inches) for kitty to dig a hole as well as enough for them to cover up what they leave behind.

- If kitty is using the litter box perfectly then please **DO NOT CHANGE A THING!** Cats are creatures of habit & do best when THEIR routine (their "norm") is not changed/disrupted. You might feel tempted to buy that "cheaper litter" or switch to something else because it might make "you" happy. Again, if kitty is using the litter box just fine then please **DO NOT CHANGE A THING!** By doing so you risk upsetting kitty's "norm" which could have an adverse effect on his/her litter box use.

- **Each litter box should be scooped at least twice (2x) per day.** Would YOU want to walk around on existing piles of waste trying to find an unused spot to do your business in? No? Then why should your cat(s) be expected to!

Some benefits of scooping at least twice per day:

- **Health of your cat:** By scooping at least twice per day you will have a better opportunity to notice if something might be amiss with your cat's health (i.e. blood in the urine, internal parasites, small clumps of urine or lack of urine could indicate your cat is blocking or blocked which is life threatening, etc.).

- **Cleanliness of your home:** By scooping at least twice per day your kitty is less likely to step in & track waste around your house.

- **Aroma of your home:** By scooping at least twice per day you will keep that "dirty litter box aroma" at bay. The best way to fix a problem is to fix 'the problem', right?!? Scented litter will only cover up the problem (the unpleasant smell). If you want the smell gone then get rid of the thing that smells ~ (i.e. the contents of the used litter box)!