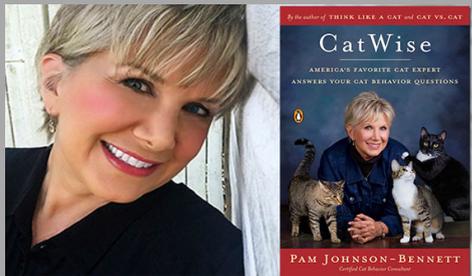


TIPS FOR CREATING AN APPEALING LITTER BOX SET-UP

(c) 2018 Cat Behavior Associates, LLC



Pam Johnson-Bennett is a certified cat behavior consultant and best-selling author of 8 books on cat behavior including *THINK LIKE A CAT* and *CATWISE*. She starred in the Animal Planet series

PSYCHO KITTY

The litter box is important to your cat. Create the right set-up, and then clean and maintain the box for your cat's health, comfort and happiness. Here are some tips to help you create maximum litter box appeal:

1. CHOOSE THE RIGHT SIZE BOX

The box should be the appropriate size for your cat. Don't ask a large cat to squeeze into a small box. Don't pick a litter box because of how well it will fit wedged between the toilet and the tub or tucked in a closet. The box size should be based on the size of your cat. Ideally, the box should be one-and-a-half times the length of your cat from tip of the nose to base of the tail.

2. RIGHT TYPE OF LITTER

Typically, cats prefer a soft, sandy litter. Most scoopable litters fall into this category. Cats can have texture

preferences and the feel of a soft substrate on their paws is generally more comfortable. Also, with the cat's keen sense of smell, highly scented litters can be offensive. If you keep the box clean you won't need to try to cover odor with a scented litter. Keep in mind how close your cat's nose gets to the litter so imagine how overwhelming a perfumed substrate must smell.

3. RIGHT AMOUNT OF LITTER

About three inches in depth is good. Keep the litter level consistent, so as you scoop, top off with fresh litter as needed. Too little litter will result in urine pooling on the bottom of the box and creating a major odor problem.

4. RIGHT NUMBER OF BOXES

In multicat households you should have the same number of boxes as cats plus one extra box for good measure. Some cats don't want to share the litter box. If you have an adequate number of boxes, you can potentially ease tension.

5. DON'T COVER THE LITTER BOX

Use an uncovered box to allow for maximum comfort and to increase escape potential. Cats, especially in a multicat environment, need to feel they can easily escape from the box in order to prevent being ambushed or trapped. With a covered box there's only one way in and out. When it comes to litter boxes, cat parents tend to think too much in terms of privacy but for a cat, privacy takes a back seat to safety.

6. SCOOP AND CLEAN

Scoop waste from the box at least twice a day. Nobody wants to use an unflushed toilet. It only takes a few seconds to check the box and scoop it.

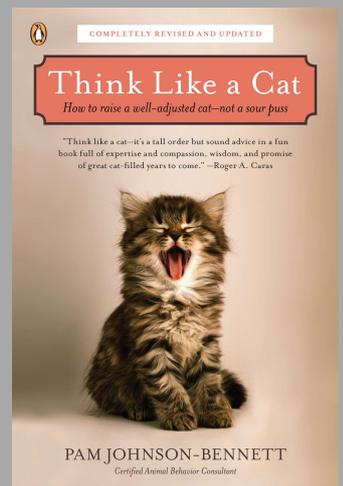
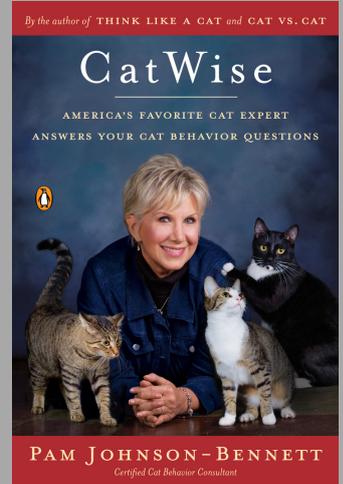
Thoroughly dump used litter and completely scrub the box once or twice a month. If you're not using clumping litter, then the box needs to be scrubbed more often. Boxes with non-clumping litter need to be scrubbed at least once a week. If the box still smells after being thoroughly scrubbed, then it's time for a new one. Odor-causing bacteria can get trapped in lacerations in the plastic caused by the cat's nails.

7. CHOOSE LOCATIONS WISELY

Don't place litter boxes all in one area. Scatter the boxes throughout the house so lower-ranking cats don't have to pass a higher-ranking cat's area and risk conflict. Pay attention to each cat's need for personal space.

Don't locate litter boxes near feeding stations. Cats don't eat where they eliminate. This is a survival instinct that even the most pampered indoor cat follows. Locate boxes with a cat's comfort, safety and convenience in mind. For example, you may want a box in the basement but it may be painful for an older cat to go up and down the stairs. Keep your cat's needs in mind.

The latest books by



Available at bookstores everywhere and online at Amazon or through your favorite online book retail site.

Visit the free library of articles on our website for more information on cat behavior and training.