

Litter Box Troubleshooting

Kittens do not usually have to be trained to use a litter box once they know where it is and, of course, if it is in a **convenient** yet somewhat **private** location. However, there are some cases in which a kitten will not use the litter box. If the kitten is eliminating inappropriately, there is probably a **preference problem**. In these cases, some of the tips given below may help to determine the kitten's preferences. Wait a week or two between each change to allow the kitten to make a choice and show her preference.

You can try using a **different litter**. Some kittens prefer litters that clump because they are softer. When trying out a new litter, it is important that you get another litter box identical to the one you already have. Put the same amount of the current litter in one box and the new litter in the other box. Let the kitten make her own decision. Try this for **two weeks** before making a final decision on which litter your kitten prefers.

Try **changing the amount of litter** you put in the box. Some kittens prefer a lot of litter (four to six inches), and others prefer little to none. Try adjusting the level of litter over a week or two. Start off with just an inch or so of litter in one box and no litter in another. Over the next week, gradually increase the amount of litter you put in her box.

If you have *more than one cat*, **get separate litter boxes** for each **plus one extra**. Cats often do not like sharing their litter boxes.

You can also try to **slowly change the box's location**, little by little. It should be placed somewhere that is **easily accessible** for your kitten, offers **escape routes**, and is **quiet** and **private** because *cats do enjoy their privacy*.

Make sure to **clean the litter box on a regular basis**. Kittens do not like dirty litter boxes or dirty litter. Scoop the box out a few times a day and wash the litter box at least once a month. If urine or faeces gets stuck to the box, the box should be washed immediately.

Check **whether the litter box is large enough** for your cat. Many commercial litter boxes are not big enough for many cats. If you think this could be a concern, consider a larger plastic container for the cat to eliminate in. A good general rule for litter box size is three times the length of your cat from nose to tail. Plastic storage boxes that are designed to go under a bed make excellent litter boxes. They are usually long enough for most cats and low enough for easy entry and exit.

Be sure the litter box offers **an easy entrance and exit** for your cat. If it does not, you may want to open up the side further or consider a new box.

When you first bring your kitten home, you should keep her in one room. This room should contain her litter box. As you gradually introduce your kitten to more areas of your house, the litter box can be moved with her. When she has access to the full

house, you can move the litter box slowly, a foot or so every day until it has reached its new location.

If you have a large home, **consider getting multiple litter boxes**. Again, place these in areas where they are easily accessible and provide privacy and escape routes.

You can also begin to **reward your kitten's good behaviour!** Pay close attention to your kitten. When she uses her litter box, give her a treat! This may help her want to use her box more frequently and stop the inappropriate elimination.

Any recent changes in lifestyle or home surroundings may cause your cat to suddenly stop using her litter box as well. Cats are very sensitive to any sort of change, and this may be the root of the problem. Sometimes simply moving furniture around is enough of a disturbance for a kitten to stop using her litter box. If you have moved furniture around, make sure your kitten **knows where her litter box is** and give her **lots of assurance** that everything is okay. This is, in fact, a great time to introduce a new litter box and reward her when she does use her new litter box.

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If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us

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