

# Thinking Inside the Box

## How to create the purrfect litterbox setup!



This guide is meant for people who are getting a cat and setting up their litterboxes for the first time, or for people who have minor issues with their cats occasionally going outside of the box. If your cat suddenly starts going outside of the litterbox, the **FIRST** thing you should do is see a veterinarian to make sure your cat is physically healthy. Urinary issues are serious business!

### Do you have enough litterboxes?

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- Minimum: number of cats plus one; at least one on each floor of the house**

### Is your litterbox big enough?

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- Length should be 1.5 x the length of largest cat (not including tail)**
  - Purchase larger litterboxes (e.g., Nature's Miracle)
  - Make your own from a utility tub (deep sides with a U-shaped door cut into one of the sides, leave lid off) OR shallow under-the-bed storage container

### Your cat's nose knows!

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- Remove hoods from litterboxes**
  - Purchase litter mats to keep litter from spreading everywhere
  - Doggie deterrent: litterbox within a box, "Door Buddy" straps, baby gates with a small pet door in them, or a small cat door that excludes dogs (RFID chip or magnetic)
- Let's talk litter:**
  - Scoop litter clumps out at least daily
  - Use unscented litter
  - Cats prefer fine-grained clumping litter
  - Replace ALL litter at least every 2-4 weeks
  - Cats prefer litter to be 2-3 inches deep, maximum
  - Do NOT use litterbox liners!
- Wash litterboxes periodically**
  - Rinse boxes with hot water and let dry, then sprinkle baking soda in bottom of boxes when you replace litter
  - Periodically wash boxes with mild soap (like Dawn) and hot water (no bleach)
  - Replace boxes every 6-12 months

## Location, Location, Location

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- Multiple access routes**
- Out in the open or tucked away?**
  - Beware of potential “ambush” spots when cat is in litterbox - no nearby corners or perches
  - Clear view of rest of area
  - Avoid busy areas with lots of traffic
  - Avoid places completely out of the way (e.g., dark corner of the basement)
- Spread boxes out so that they are not perceived as just one big box**
- Place boxes away from food and water stations**
- Place away from machines that may startle (water heaters, washers, etc.)**
- Access should be unencumbered – no barriers!**
- Bonus points: nightlights**

## Accidents Happen...

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- Oopsies will happen!** Use an appropriate enzyme-based cleaner (e.g., unscented Anti-Icky Poo). Do not use detergents or soaps with enzyme cleaners; these will kill beneficial enzymes.
- Protect your carpet – place vinyl carpet runner underneath litterboxes**

For more information:

[www.felinebehaviorsolutions.com](http://www.felinebehaviorsolutions.com)

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Marci Koski, PhD, is a certified feline training and behavior professional who has successfully helped cats and their people resolve behavior problems such as house-soiling, aggression (with other cats and people), fearfulness, destructive behaviors, and many other issues. The mission of Feline Behavior Solutions is to keep cats in homes and out of shelters as the result of treatable behavioral issues. By providing cat guardians with the necessary education and tools to prevent or treat behavior problems, Dr. Marci helps guardians coexist with their cats in happy, healthy relationships throughout their lives.

