
About.com: Cats**Litter Box Maintenance**

By Franny Syufy, About.com Guide

The Importance of Litter Box Maintenance

Poor litter box maintenance is often the cause of litter box mishaps, and is suspect only second to physical problems when a cat begins to miss the litter box. Since litter box avoidance is a major cause of surrenders of cats to shelters, it is important that cats be given a fighting chance, by making sure their litter boxes are kept immaculately clean at all times.

Cats hate dirty, stinky litter boxes, and may be driven to search for substitutes, whether it be a corner of the carpet or in a basket of clean laundry in the closet. Think about it: do you enjoy using one of those "portable potties" commonly found in public places? Your cat's sense of smell is 14 times stronger¹ than yours, so a litter box that smells reasonably clean to you may outright stink to your cat's discerning olfactory senses.

This step-by-step tutorial will demonstrate conscientious litter box maintenance.

While automated litter boxes are gaining popularity, their prices are prohibitive to many cat owners, so we'll concentrate on the less-expensive plain box, which may be favored by more cats, anyway.

A couple of tips, first:

- **The One + One Rule**

The rule of thumb is that a household should provide one litter box for each cat resident plus one extra. Any variance should be to the plus side, i.e., we have seven boxes for four cats.

- **For Multiple Cats, Try "Litter Stations"**

If you have more than three litter boxes, you'll probably find yourself running out of logical places for them. A "Litter Station" with two or three boxes side-by-side will accommodate more than one cat at a time, and will also make scooping and cleanup a bit more convenient.

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