
About.com: Cats

Where should I put the litter box?

By Franny Syufy, About.com Guide

Question: Where should I put the litter box?

Answer: Cats tend to be very fussy about their litter boxes, and the correct placement is of extreme importance. Obviously, you don't want a litter box in the middle of your living room or in the kitchen next to the cat's food dishes. First, you should know the rule of *one plus one*: You should have one litter box per cat, plus one extra. With a large number of cats, you probably should have two or three extras. This is because some cats hate to share a litter box with other cats; also, some cats refuse to poop and pee in the same litterbox. I'm sure you can see the implications.

Factors to Consider in Litter Box Placement:

- *A Private Location*
Cats like privacy when they eliminate, not because of modesty, but because of a primal fear of being ambushed by an enemy when their guard is down. A guest bathroom would be ideal, or the closet of a guest bedroom. If space is a problem, consider using an inexpensive screen in the corner of a living room or bedroom.
- *A Quiet Location*
Try to avoid a busy thoroughfare in your house, and if you put the litter box in a laundry-utility room, place it far enough away from appliance, so that the noise from washers and dryers don't stress the cat.
- *Away from Food, Please*
Aside from sanitary reasons, respect your cat's fastidious nature by keeping the litter box separated from his food dishes.
- *Don't Trap the Cat*
Some cats like to play mind games with other cats, and will lie in wait to intimidate the other as he tries to leave the litter box. Try to put the litter box in a location that will eliminate this possibility
- *Don't Make Them Climb Stairs*
Although most cats will freely roam up and down stairs, if you have young kittens or very old cats, forcing them to climb stairs (up or down) to use the litter box may lead to litter box avoidance. Particularly avoid dank, dark basements, which may be subject to mold and bacteria.

You may need litter boxes on all levels of your house if you have several cats, but otherwise, don't place the only boxes in a location that will require climbing stairs.

- *Keep the Doors Open*
Even if you've found the perfect spots for your litter boxes, the effort will be wasted if you forget and close the doors to those rooms. Make sure your cats can always reach their litter boxes.
- *Consider Litter Box "Furniture"*
There are many companies online that provide attractive furniture designed to hide litter boxes, from very attractive wooden pieces to simpler bamboo cabinets. If you are really cramped for space, one of these might be a viable alternative to a litter box in a bathroom.

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