A guide to indoor kittens

Indoor cats like to explore, but their needs and behaviours are very different to outdoor cats. If your cat prefers to stay indoors, we have some helpful tips and advice on keeping them stimulated, happy and most importantly safe, by ensuring that their curiosity doesn't get them into any bother.

Indoor cat tips

Cats can adapt to indoor living very easily, and if you choose to keep your cat indoors throughout their lifetime then read our helpful guide to ensure that you're providing them with everything they need to exhibit natural behaviour in a home environment, plus knowing all about the hazards to watch out for that could cause them harm around your home.

Keeping them entertained

It is a natural behaviour for a cat to hunt, and whilst they are indoors they won't have access to the usual things that they might chase such as leaves or long grass. It is essential that you give your cat the opportunity to exhibit this natural behaviour as it will release natural happy endorphins.

It is essential for you to give your cat plenty variety of toys to chase as well as activities to keep them occupied. Pets at Home have a fantastic range of toys and accessories for your cat to enjoy in-store.

If you are out of the house for a lot of the day, you might also want to get another cat to ensure they don't get lonely.

Ensuring you keep your cat stimulated will ensure that they don't become frustrated and begin to exhibit behavioural issues such as spraying, scratching furniture, aggression, over-grooming and fur-loss, depression and soiling the house.

Give them a safe place to hide

Indoor cats might find new visitors to the house a lot more stressful than outdoor cats, due to them not being able to escape quite as easily from the noise. Ensure that you provide your indoor cat with a safe quiet place to hide should they be startled by an increase in noise within the house.

They are also not free from the risk of stress from other cats in their environment either as they could still see other cats in the neighbourhood from the window. Ensure that you provide them with a safe sanctuary where they can hide and take cover should they feel the need.

Think about the other hazards

- Always ensure that you keep washing machines, tumble dryers and cupboards closed so your cat doesn't accidentally wander in and get trapped.
- Close toilet lids so they also don't try and drink from there when you've had bleach in it.
- Ensure you safely fence areas of balconies and windows so your cat doesn't fall through it.
- Houseplants are important to watch out for as some plants are extremely toxic to cats, particularly lilies, foxgloves and tulips.
- Do not have any of these plant species in your home as even having them brush by the flowers could transfer pollen that they could ingest when licking their fur.
- Household cleaning products are also really easy to get onto your cats fur and paws, and they can lick it off and ingest it as a result.
- Ensure you keep all cleaning products, other items such a rat poisoning, anti-freeze, decorating chemicals, flea treatment for dogs, slug pellets, human medication and even some human foods like onions, raisins and chocolate away from contact with your cat.

If you think your cat might have ingested or been into contact with a poisonous substance, take them to seek veterinary advice immediately. Even if they do appear fine and well – it is always recommended for them to see a vet right away just to be sure.

Obesity prevention

It is quite common for indoors cats to contract obesity due to them not getting enough exercise and overeating.

Ensure you encourage your indoor cat to exercise by playing with them daily and monitor the amount of food you're giving them to maintain a healthy weight.

You can go into a Pets at Home store and chat to a colleague about recommended daily feeding for your indoor cat.

Play and exercise

Toys, towers, scratch posts and activity centres are great for indoor cats to ensure they have enough things to keep them amused.

Ensure you spend time playing with your cat on a daily basis to give them company and help mimic the natural behaviour they would be doing outdoors.

Teaser toys are great for encouraging this behaviour in your cat.

Make sure you change their toys regularly as well to keep them interested and help them feel that they're experiencing something new each time.

How to enhance their indoor environment

Cats are very clean creatures and they like to eat and go to the toilet in very different places. Ensure you place your indoor cats litter tray away from their food bowls and also give them a separate place to rest and hide as well.

Cats like to have their water bowls away from their feeding bowls as well, so ensure you take this into consideration when setting up their environment.

Cats like to be in high up places as well as safe places so providing them with access to different levels within their home is really important.

You can get this with cat scratchers and play centres and even giving them access to secured window ledges where they can observe the outside world from a safe high up place.

Scratching is a really important natural behaviour for your indoor cat. Outdoor cats will usually maintain their claws on the different surfaces they get access to outdoors so it is particularly important to ensure you have enough scratch posts inside your home to keep them happy.

This also helps them stretch when they wake up and very importantly, will prevent them from scratching your furniture.

Litter tray hygiene

Indoor cats especially need to have access to a clean toilet facility that is away from where they eat and sleep. Ensuring that their litter tray is cleaned daily is important will prevent accidents as well as make the litter tray more hygienic.

There are a number of different types of cat litter available in your local Pets at Home store and it's usually best to try out a number of different types to see what works for your cat the best.

You should always lay down around 3cm of litter into their tray, to ensure your cat has enough litter to dig with as they would in an outdoor environment.

Always ensure you're looking out for your cat's welfare and safety in the right way and protecting them from the unexpected.

Pet insurance can help your cat

Good pet insurance providers make sure that their policies cover many of the risks that come with owning a cat.

Find out more about keeping your loved one protected from the unexpected with our recommended partner, Petplan®, and take a look at our insurance page for more information.

Terms, conditions and excesses apply and may be varied on renewal. No cover is provided for pre-existing conditions.

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