

QUICK TIPS FOR LITTER BOX SUCCESS

All of our cats up for general adoption at the Humane Society for Southwest Washington have a proven history of appropriate litter box use, at least during their time here in our care. Some cats do come in with a previous history of litter box issues, and those cats are always monitored for an extended period to ensure that they get back on course for proper litter box use before they're approved for adoption into an indoor home.

There are many reasons why cats can develop poor litter box habits: conflict between multiple cats in a home, disliking for the litter box type or the litter itself, past medical condition, disliking for the location of the litter box. The best approach for dealing with litter box issues is to prevent them before they happen by making the litter box as enticing for the cat as possible. If the cat does eliminate outside the litter box, you must act quickly to resolve the problem before the behavior becomes habitual.

Here are some tips to help you successfully transition your new cat into your home without any recurring litter box accidents:

- Provide at least two litter boxes in the home, and more if you have more than one cat. (As a general rule, you want one more litter box than the number of cats you have.)
- Most cats prefer a large litter box that they can enter easily, so you may want to buy the largest litter box that you can for your home.
- Most cats also prefer a shallow bed of litter. Start off by providing one to two inches of litter in the box rather than three to four inches.
- Scoop and clean the litter box at least once per day — better if you do it even more frequently. Consider dumping the entire box and refilling it with brand new litter once a week and rinse the empty box with baking soda water between litter batches.
- Many cats prefer unscented litter. Here at HSSW, we use walnut litter, which cats currently use without incident, so you may consider using it as well.
- Most cats do not like plastic litter box liners or covered litter boxes, but some cats do prefer covered boxes. Feel free to ask which type the cat is using here.
- Cats like their litter boxes located in a quiet but not "cornered" location. They like to be able to see what's going on around them and have multiple routes of escape should they feel the need to leave the litter box area quickly. Laundry rooms are often too loud due to the machines, so try a walk-in closet, a bathroom or even a less-used spare bedroom.

At HSSW, we want every adoption to be a success story! Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions or concerns regarding your newly adopted cat. We are here to help in any way we can!