

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT FOR MULTI-CAT HOUSEHOLDS

1

ABCs of litter boxes:

Accessible

- Number of cats = number of litter boxes +1
- Place litter boxes on every level of the house
- Avoid dark or noisy areas of the house
- Ensure two exit points for every litter box placement



Big

- Jumbo sized uncovered litter boxes are best (shallow storage containers)
- Senior cats and kittens should have litter boxes with low sides for easier access

Clean

- Scoop litter daily and clean the whole box weekly with mild soap
- Substrate is very important, and once your cats have a preferred substrate it is best not to change it. Sand-like litter is generally the best choice for most cats



- Do NOT place litter boxes in the same area as your cat's food and water.
- Avoid high traffic or remote areas.
- Do not place litter boxes in loud or odorous places, such as the laundry room or near the furnace.



- Put the litter boxes in separate locations around the house, ideally in quiet private places that are easy for a cat to access.

2

Feeding

Designate several feeding areas throughout the home to distinguish core territory amongst multiple cats in the house. Water is an important resource to cats and several water stations throughout the home will potentially encourage them to visit more frequently. Cats find water more attractive if it is located away from food. Placing food or water against a wall where a cat would have to have their back to the room in order to eat or drink leaves them very vulnerable. Many cats will choose to paw at the water so they can be more aware of their surroundings and keep their head up.



3

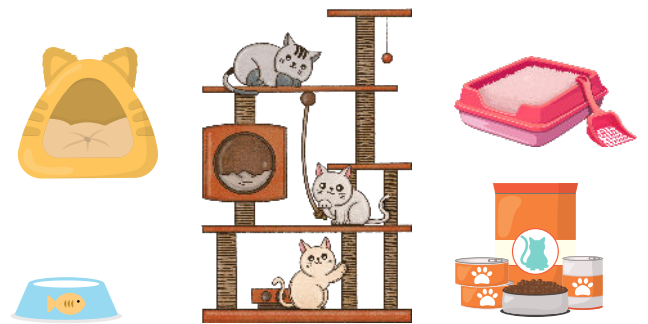
Safe spaces

Supply high resting places, beds, and private areas in sufficient numbers. Provide additional perches and hiding places to allow your cats the opportunity to space themselves out as they prefer. Cats enjoy exploring vertical spaces as well as having a high vantage point from which to view the outside world. Window perches, cat trees and cat-friendly shelving are ideal ways to vary your cat's environment. Safe hiding areas (e.g., boxes and tunnels) throughout the home are recommended, but especially in the areas guardians tend to be in the most. Cat shelves are great but should have a separate entrance and exit point. Numerous scratching posts should be located near entrances, beds and feeding stations to ensure appropriate surfaces are available and to prevent competition.

4

Resources

Food, water, litter boxes, beds, toys, scratching posts, high perches and private places should all be included in the formula "one per cat plus one extra" and positioned in different locations to limit competition. If separate social groups have been identified and space is limited, then "one per social group plus one extra" may be enough.



5

Location, location, location:

Evaluate your home and remember there should be more than one entry/exit point to each area of the house in order to prevent a cat from trapping/cornering another cat, or preventing access to resources. When placing resources, remember that cats are both prey and predator animals and due to this, they can often be on the lookout. Also, when placing resources, place them in the areas you rest in the most, such as living rooms or bedrooms. Remember, our cats want to be with us. There should be enough resources for all the cats to rest comfortably away from each other.

6

Cease punishment

Using a spray bottle, scruffing, hitting and yelling are all forms of punishment. Punishment teaches pets to distrust their humans because the punishment can often appear unpredictable to them. Punishment also increases fear, anxiety and stress and can lead to aggression.

