

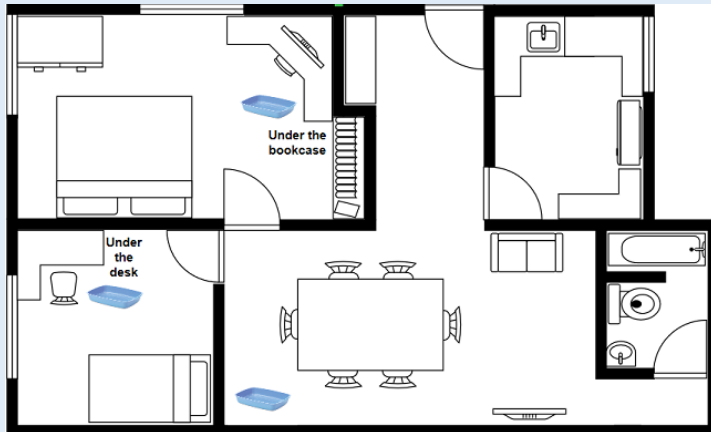
The importance of litter trays

Like us, cats want to toilet in private. This is primarily down to the fact that cats are at their most vulnerable when their attention is elsewhere, such as going to the toilet.

Here are just a few tips that can help when settling a new cat into your home or even if you just have some litter tray questions.

- A litter trays position is very important. Ensure it is somewhere private, in a discreet corner maybe or even under a unit or table. It should be away from their food and water and not be placed in busy thoroughfares such as a hallway.
- Cats will often not use litter trays if they are near cat flaps, doors or full length glass windows. This is because they may perceive a threat from outside.

The diagram below shows an example of some spaces to place a litter tray. If you have more than one storey in your house it may be a good idea to place a litter tray upstairs where it is likely to be quieter.



- Cats like their litter trays to be clean and may be reluctant to use a dirty or soiled tray. Scooping soiled litter from the litter tray at least once a day and cleaning the tray completely with an unscented detergent once a week will help to prevent accidents and maintains hygiene.



- It is important to note that whilst some cats will happily use a litter tray with a lid on (a covered tray) many will not. When you adopt your new cat you will be given information regarding the cats preferred type of litter tray and we would recommend you continue to use the same type in the home. It is possible to introduce cats to covered litter trays but it is always best to start off by introducing the bottom first without the lid to let them get used to what is often a lot higher sided tray. You can then introduce the lid but we would recommend the flap be removed as this can cause negative associations as it hits the cat on the bottom as they enter the tray.
- Equally as important is the type of litter a cat prefers. Some cats will not use certain types of litter and again you will be informed which type your new cat prefers. The litter needs to be deep enough for them to be able to dig and cover when they go to the toilet. It may be possible in some cases to change your cat's litter and the best way to do so is by adding a little of the new type at a time to the existing type over a period of about a week.

- Size of litter trays are also important as what was once suitable for an 8 week old kitten is no longer suitable for a fully grown adult cat. Your cat needs to be able to stand fully in the litter tray. There are all sorts of sizes available so do look around for the right one.
- It is always a good idea to have one litter tray per cat plus one extra, some cats even prefer the option of two trays, this is even more important if your cats are kept indoors.
- It is always worth ensuring a clean litter tray is available, especially as your cat gets older and they wish to spend more time indoors or if your cat just gets spooked by something outside such as fireworks. Also if you keep your cats in overnight a litter tray will need to be provided for them. It is after all always better to be safe than sorry.

