



Lake Minnetonka Pet Wellness Center

Wayzata

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Westonka Animal Hospital & Laser Surgery Center

Mound

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Cat Litter Box Training

By the time new pet owners get their kitten/cat home, usually their new companion is already litter trained. It is a rare case in which your new pet has not learned the proper use of the litter box, due to such circumstances as a kitten being removed from the mother too early or an adult that has previously lived outdoors.

In such rare cases you should begin litter training by confining the kitten with all food water and litter box to a small area (such as a bathroom), until the cat is using the litter box. Cats do have an instinct to cover their urine and feces, so by confining your cat to a smaller area, he is forced to use what is available to him.

There a few basic steps to follow for proper litter box use

- 1) **Type of box.** You will need a litter box, litter and a scoop. There are many styles of litter boxes available, some of which are: regular, hooded (not recommended) and automated (self-cleaning). We do not recommend hooded litter boxes because there is a tendency for them not to get cleaned daily. The hood is typically for the owners benefit, to reduce odors, and not the cat's benefit. If the box is cleaned daily, odor will not be a problem.
- 2) **Type of Litter.** Also available are various types of litter, including: clay, clumping (the urine can actually be scooped out) and pellets (made from recycled paper or pine and are dust free). You should have the litter 2 to 4 inches deep in the box, so that your cat can cover sufficiently.
- 3) **Location.** Try to pick a quiet place (noise such as a washer can make them fearful) that has good ventilation and is easily accessible, to place the litter box. Be sure to show your new pet where the litter box is by placing him/her in it several times.
- 4) **Cleanliness.** Remember to scoop out the stool/urine daily and change the entire litter weekly from the litter box. If you keep the box fresh, your house will smell better and your cat will not be tempted to go to the bathroom around your house because he/she is unhappy with a dirty litter box. Another helpful hint to prevent such behavior is to keep one more litter box than you have cats. For example: if you have 2 cats it is recommended to have 3 litter boxes.

