



NEWS RELEASE



City of Los Angeles Department of Animal Services
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To Be or Not to Be...Outdoors?

That is the question cat lovers ask and debate. Those favoring indoors only for cats cite, among other reasons, safety risks associated with the outdoors such as exposure to disease; large animal predators; and skin cancer caused by sunlight. Those who favor allowing cats to go outdoors cite cats' natural curiosity, exercise, and fresh air as good reasons for cats to have outdoor adventures.

Los Angeles Animal Services would like to offer a way to combine the best of both philosophies to keep your cat happy and healthy indoors.

Making your indoor environment cozy and interactive for your cat can be a fun, creative project for you and your family. Here are a few tips to start the transition:

- Shopping is not required. Simple things like ping-pong balls, paper bags and cardboard boxes can provide hours of fun for a cat.
- If you like to shop, there is a limitless selection of cat toys to provide exercise while exciting kitty's natural curiosity. They may just entertain you a bit, too! Some cats enjoy exploring the house "hunting" for hidden toys.
- Vertical space that is accessible to cats will expand kitty's territory. There are commercially available designer carpet-covered cat trees, or you may be handy and able to build your own. Some cat furniture also includes a cozy hideout for catnaps and a scratching post. As cats scamper up and down this carpet cat tree, they get good exercise—the same kind they would get outdoors on a live tree.
- Some cats delight in posing on a window seat to the outside world that provides hours of fascination while watching people, squirrels or birds. A soft, safe window perch or a chair with a cushioned seat will do the trick.
- You can buy small 4-inch containers of cat greens or plant pesticide-free alfalfa, grass, bird or catnip seeds in your own container. Your cat can graze safely indoors.

You can allow your cat to safely enjoy the outdoors on an enclosed patio space. If you have a yard, you can install fence netting angled inwards from the top to stop cats from climbing out of an enclosed area within your yard. Supervision will be important if you live where other animals can get into your yard. You can also train your cat to walk in a harness and lead so you can enjoy the outdoors together.

Outdoor cats usually make a smooth transition to indoors. You can do a gradual approach to bringing an outside cat into the house by bringing him/her in for increasingly longer periods of time. Or just decide today is the day. Give your kitty an interesting and safe indoor space, a screened patio, or teach him/her to walk in a harness. They'll live a longer and healthier life and he/she won't feel that he/she has missed a thing. They'll love you even more for caring.

For more information or assistance call LA Animal Services at 1-888-452LA-PET1/1-888-452-7381 (TTY Hearing impaired: 877-875-8205) or visit the website at www.LAAnimalServices.com