

Litterbox-related issues

Contributed by Administrator
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Q: I have a really bizarre situation on my hands. My cat, Lola, has begun pooping and peeing all over the house. It's like she's lost her mind. She pees in the same room where we feed her. She peed on the couch and just stood next to it. She has pooped in the bath tub several times. This is very odd because she likes to get in there after we've taken our showers and drink the water around the drain. The puzzling thing is that nothing has changed. I can't imagine what could have upset her to cause her to behave in such a manner.

I'd use Feliway, but she doesn't pee in the same place every time.

I will get her checked out for a urinary tract infection, but since she is also pooping inappropriately, I don't think they are related.

We have plenty of litter boxes. We keep them clean. I do everything I'm supposed to do. I'm perplexed. Any ideas?

For the meantime, she is in the garage, and she is NOT happy!

A: Cats may urinate and defecate both out of the box when there is a bladder or kidney problem. If they associate the box with the pain of cystitis, they will avoid it for both urine and stool and will seek a 'cooler' place, like a tub. Most likely there is urinary infection causing this and being ostracized to the garage will only make it worse. Stress of that kind of confinement is very difficult to a kitty that isn't used to such treatment and stress can be an underlying component of many urinary conditions.

It would be much easier on the kitty to confine her to your bedroom or another room in your house until you have her urine checked. Place a new, big box with no hood in the room you're confining her. Confinement to a place where she is comfortable like a bedroom full of her human's scents is comforting. Cats are extremely scent-oriented.

Maureen Owen LVT
President

FBI, Inc.Q: I am somewhat of a similar situation except that the peeing is happening in ONE location only, on my bathroom rug! The one good thing is that the rug is washable, but I have to wash it every day! Also, this same cat defecates in the SAME spot as well, on the floor of one of my bedroom closets. She uses the litter boxes (I have 2 of them) once in a while, but not too often. I have 4 other cats.

Any suggestions besides bringing her to the vet? I am bringing her to the vet in the next few weeks to see if she has a bladder infection.

A: There is a formula and standard practices with multiple kitties and litterboxes. I'll delineate it :

- * Rule of thumb, 1 litterbox per cat, plus one extra..so you need 5 boxes.
- * Use scooping litter, scoop daily and totally clean once a month or more.
- * Remove hoods (traps odors like a port-o-let does)
- * Remove liners , cats will slip and sometimes will bother while they scratch in it.
- * Litterpans should be on all floors of the house and spread out to give kitties equal opportunity to use it when needed.
- * Use big boxes where possible. Plastic rubbermaid type totes that are approx 18" high work really well. Cut a door in the front or side for easy access. Cats love these boxes.

Likely your cat using a litterbox as we use a restroom stall. If it is occupied we don't use it. If it is dirty, we don't use it. If it's inaccessible we won't use it either. Don't keep your boxes in the basement and garage..not convenient, esp for a geriatric or kitten. A laundry room may work but if the noise of the machine suddenly starts up, it might scare them away.

Bathroom rugs naturally attract cats. Despite being clean, they are in the bathroom and thus will harbor a urine odor that only cats can smell. You can put a deterrent on the rug, like a Stay Away or Scat Mat. (<http://www.contech-inc.com/products/>) to help retrain the kitty from the area or just not use a rug.

As far as the defecating in the closet, adding more boxes, etc should stop that problem and close that door to deter the kitty or even stack aluminum cans on top of each other to scare the cat when he enters the area.

And yes, you should make sure the kitty doesn't have a bladder problem or you will never retrain the kitty to use her box. Cats can equate the box with the pain of cystitis and thus go elsewhere.

Cats prefer using litterboxes and will if their needs are met. Just figuring out their needs can be the difficult part!:) There is a behavior book called 'From the Cat's Point of View' that gives excellent tips on cat behavior in an easy, funny format. It can be bought on-line on Amazon and elsewhere, I highly recommend it!

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