



Peninsula Humane Society & SPCA

A CHANGE OF SCENE

Bringing the great outdoors inside for your cat

Many guardians choose to keep their cats indoors at all times, where they won't fight with other cats, fall victim to encounters with wildlife or vehicles or ingest poisons. Yet, by doing so, people question whether they are sacrificing too much of their cat's enjoyment. If your cat is an indoor-only cat, consider making a few changes to your home to improve his quality of life.

Cats like to observe their world from above -- which is why they climb trees and roofs -- so give yours a cat tree or kitty jungle gym to climb. Cat trees also provide an acceptable spot for scratching (unlike your couch or drapes!). Whether you buy or make your own, any climbing structure for cats should be sturdy and stable. Such structures make a great addition to established playtime routines. A ribbon disappearing around the corner or up the side of a cat tree can be irresistible to a cat grown blasé about the same old games.

Give your cat a window seat so he can watch the birds or bask in a sunbeam. You may only need to put a comfy cushion on an existing ledge, or you can purchase a special extension just for cats.

Consider growing cat grass in a pot (available at pet supply stores) for him to chew on.

Think about building a screened-in enclosure where your cat can pretend he's an outdoor kitty. Fencing products like Purr . . . fect Fence® give you the option of enclosing your yard or creating a freestanding cat playpen. You can also build a screened extension to your house where your cats can enjoy the breeze, the birdsong, and the sun without worry.

If you aren't able to bring the outside in, however, don't overlook less elaborate ways to vary your cat's perspective. A paper bag (handles removed), an empty cardboard box, or a fabric tunnel (available in many pet stores) alters the familiar landscape of her domain with no great outlay of funds or effort. Your efforts to stimulate her curiosity and get her moving will make your cat healthier and happier!

For more info, call our free Behavior Helpline (650/340-7022 x783 or, for Spanish, x786) or consider a low-cost consultation. To make a consultation appointment, call 650/340-7022 x667. The PHS/SPCA Behavior Department, like many shelter programs, is funded by donations.