

Anywhere But There: Litter Box Issues and Cats



By: Lisbeth Tanz

To cat lovers, cats are amazing creatures. They can be lithe and graceful...and then fall flat on their faces, get up and give you a look that says, "I meant to do that." Cats purr, which makes them an irresistible addition to a day when all you need is a friend. Personally, I believe that if all the world leaders had a purring cat put on

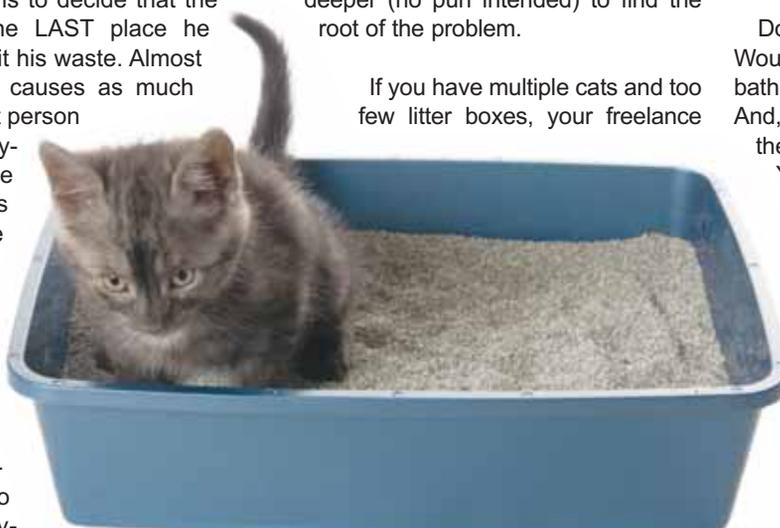
their chests, we could achieve World Peace. But I digress.

The surest way for a cat to start a household war is to decide that the litter box is the LAST place he wants to deposit his waste. Almost no other issue causes as much distress to a cat person than a potty wayward kitty. The cause of this unwelcome change can be varied, but a diligent investigation can yield positive results. Below are some potential reasons for Kitty to decide "anywhere, but there."

Always have Kitty thoroughly examined to make sure he doesn't have any medical issues that could be the cause of his defecation. Issues can include: bladder/urinary tract infection, cystitis,

kidney problems, diabetes, intestinal parasites and hormonal issues (only in unneutered cats). If medical issues aren't the cause, then you'll need to dig deeper (no pun intended) to find the root of the problem.

If you have multiple cats and too few litter boxes, your freelance



pottier may be protesting. Add more boxes to see if that doesn't alleviate the problem. Be sure to tidy them up on a frequent and regular basis. Dirty boxes are another reason for Kitty to potty elsewhere.

If you have a large cat, make sure the litter box(es) are large, too. If you've ever tried to use a bathroom on an airplane, you'll understand why this is important.

Don't place the litter box near his food. Would you want to eat near or in your bathroom? (Wait, don't answer that.) And, to reduce Kitty's stress level, place the litter box in a quiet, private area. You don't like going in front of an audience, do you? (Don't answer that question, either.)

If you've recently moved, introduced a new family member, rearranged or bought new furniture, these can all be stressors to your cat. Despite what you might think, cats don't enjoy making messes outside the litter box; a calm, logical approach to the issue will hasten a positive resolution quicker than yelling or punishing your cat, which doesn't work anyway.

Have a topic you'd like to see discussed here? Email me at ltanz@stlwomensjournal.com.

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