



Cats Come Clean

What Your Cat
Wants You to Know
About Litter Boxes

by
Suzanne Hetts, Ph.D.
Daniel Q. Estep, Ph.D.

Let me introduce myself. I'm Buffett, a big, orange, middle-aged tabby. In case you're wondering, my namesake is Jimmy Buffett, because my mom's a big fan. I guess that means she's a Parrothead. But I suppose I live up to my name, as I'm a bit of a wild guy who likes to have his own way about things.

I know quite a bit about cats and litter boxes, being one and using the other. And living with two behaviorists who are always trying to get inside my head, I've learned a lot about other cats as well. If every cat owner would follow each of these tips, we'd have a lot fewer cat owners calling us for help. Take these tips, and me seriously. Your cat will thank you and you will likely create a litter box your cat will use. Now start reading and don't be surprised if your cat decides to help by sprawling across the booklet. Enjoy!

What Do I Know, and When Do I Know It

_____ **1** Be glad you don't have to teach me how to use the litter box – I already know. It's not necessary to place me in the box and move my feet around in the litter. This is not instructional, just annoying. When the time comes, believe me, I know what to do with litter and similar materials without your help.

_____ **2** Recognize that I can use a litter box even if I didn't see my mom use one. While my mom can give me some pointers, I don't depend on her to teach me about litter boxes. If I like what's in the box I'm smart enough to use it without mom having to teach me. If you build it, I will come.

_____ **3** Know what influences my normal toilet habits. From the time I am about three weeks old, I'm naturally inclined to relieve myself in soft, loose materials. It's very important to me to have just the right stuff and in just the right location to be able to bury my waste. If you know what's important to me, you'll be more likely to give me a litter box that meets my needs.

_____ **4** Guarantee my safety when I'm in the litter box. I must feel sure that nothing bad will happen to me when I'm in the box. If you grab me to give me a pill, catch me to give me a bath, or to put me in my crate to go the veterinarian when I'm in the box, I may stop using it. It only takes one time for me to learn the litter box isn't safe, but your nice soft bed is.

Location, Location, Location

_____ **5** Put my litter box where I don't have to hunt for it. When nature calls, I shouldn't have to go on a hike to find my box. I won't

