

How To Cat-Proof Your Home



Stuff

☛ **Protect Valuables**

Cats are curious. That's one of their main jobs – being curious. So you won't want to leave your Ming Dynasty antique vase sitting on the coffee table. Because about ten seconds into Kitty's first exploration of the house, she will spring up on the table and topple the Ming Dynasty Vase, that is.

☛ **Breakables**

Put away any breakable treasures that are remotely accessible to your cat. Jumping up onto high places (like shelves and counters) is innate cat behavior; trying to stop it will be stressful for both you and kitty. Instead, put yourself into the mind of the cat, look around, and remove anything you value.

☛ **Other Destroyables**

Kittens will climb your furniture and drapes. Consider covering cloth furniture with a purchased cover, or even with a blanket or bedspread. Confine drapes to off-limit rooms.

Poisonous Plants

Kittens and adult cats love to play with plants – the motion of leaves moving in a draft is irresistible. Unfortunately, part of their play involves biting and tasting – eating some plants can be fatal, so get rid of those, or hang them safely out of reach. For a comprehensive list of list of plants poisonous to pets, read the "Poisonous Plants" article in this series.

The Garage

It's best just to make the garage off-limits to your cat. Too many poisonous/hazardous materials are stored there. Anti-freeze is the worst because pets are attracted by its taste. Clean up *all* spilled anti-freeze pronto.

Other Hazards

☛ **Hanging blinds cords**

Kittens will love to bat around cords from hanging blinds, but can also get tangled up in them with disastrous consequences. The safest bet is to tie the cords up out of reach.

☛ **Electrical and phone cords**

Kittens' insatiable curiosity often leads them to one of the most dangerously tempting objects in the house: electric cords. Invest in a cord management system or tape the cords together and fasten them out of reach. Do the same with long phone cords.

☛ **Pest Poisons**

Remove any ant or roach traps from accessible areas.

☛ **Small Hazards**

Rubber bands, paper clips, thumb tacks, broken balloons, Christmas tree tinsel and other small articles are tempting play objects for cats, but pose a choking hazard. Put them away in containers, and leave the tinsel off the tree this year. Keep plastic bags and bags with small handles out of reach of your cat.

The Safe Room

Set aside a "safe room" for your new arrival. Put her food dish, water, litter box, toys, scratching post and bed in it. Give this room a thorough going over. Once kitty is comfortable in her new surroundings, it will be time to let her explore the rest of your happily cat-proofed home.

Welcome home, Kitty!

To view the complete collection of Shelter Sheets, visit www.cats.about.com/library/nosearch/blss.htm