

CATIFY YOUR OUTSIDE SPACE

CREATE THE PURRRFECT SAFE
OUTSIDE SPACE FOR YOUR CAT



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Introduction

Our guide will help you create the perfect, safe outdoor haven for your cat – regardless of how much outside space you have!

For many cats, their outdoor space may be just as important to them as their indoor space.

Providing your cat with a safe, secure and enriching outdoor environment is beneficial to their welfare. Whether you have a yard, roof terrace or balcony, there is always a way to make the outdoor space you have an outside kitty paradise!



Is it difficult to make an outside kitty haven?

Making your outside space cat-friendly can be easy and fun! All you need are a few additions to your outside space, our handy guide, and your imagination – if you want to take our suggestions and run with them! Things to consider for your outside kitty haven include:

- Places for them to hide, so they feel safe
- Places where they can get up high and have a look out spot
- Places where they can go to the toilet, in relative privacy

- Comfortable sunny spots where they can sleep and relax
- Plants they can sniff and explore
- Shelter from the wind, rain, cold and heat
- Fresh drinking water
- Something good to scratch on



Places to hide

Providing a hiding place near the entrance to the outside space can be particularly good. As soon as your cat goes outside, they'll have a safe space to go to if they feel unsafe or hesitant.

Using plants or shrubs to slightly obscure their hiding place is ideal for your cat. For the hiding place itself, you could use a wooden box or specially bought 'cat house'.

A very bare outdoor space can make your cat feel quite vulnerable or exposed because there is nowhere for them to get away and hide if they become frightened or see another cat enter their territory.

Providing good hiding places can help your cat feel much more comfortable when outside.

Places to get up high

We all know that cats like to be up high because it makes them feel safer. Giving them a good look out point where they can check for danger or escape to if they feel threatened is important when making your outdoor kitty haven. Aside from safety reasons, high up places also provide great places for them to relax and sleep in the sun! You can get creative with the kinds of items you can use but they could include shelves, tables or purpose-built cat trees.



Place for your cat to go to the toilet

An area within your outside space containing woodchip provides a toilet area that multiple cats could use (but should be cleaned regularly, just as you would a litter box!).

Cats are very clean animals and prefer to use a safe suitable toilet area far away from their food and water. Apart from this, you should also ensure that their toilet area has some privacy. Why not make use of plants and shrubs to create a barrier from prying eyes.

It is important to provide your cat with a nice, cleared area containing woodchip, sand or loose earth as a suitable place for your cat to toilet. It's important to note that your cat may have a particular preference so try testing the different options before creating the toilet area.

Comfortable sunny spots

You can easily provide nice spots for your cat to rest and sleep on by leaving an old cushion out in the garden or providing a sheltered 'cat house' with blankets left in.



Plants

Plants that attract flying insects into your outdoor space are not only good for wildlife but can provide stimulation for your cat too! Other great plants for your cat include:

- Cat grass
- Catmint
- Catnip
- Honeysuckle
- Valerian

Please see International Care Care's guide on [Poisonous Plants](#) for those plants and flowers you should avoid having in your cat-friendly outdoor space.



Shelter

Some cats will enjoy being outside, even when it's cold or raining, although you must provide some shelter to keep them dry and warm. An old wooden box or purpose-built 'cat house' can provide the perfect sheltering spot for your cat. While keeping your cat warm in winter is important, it is equally important to keep provide a shady spot for your cat to escape the heat and hot sun in summer. This can be done either with having plants they can shelter under in the heat of the day or something that serves a dual purpose like a table and chairs where they can shelter in its shade.

Fresh drinking water

It's important to ensure your cat always has access to fresh drinking water especially if they're outside in the heat of summer.

Something good to scratch

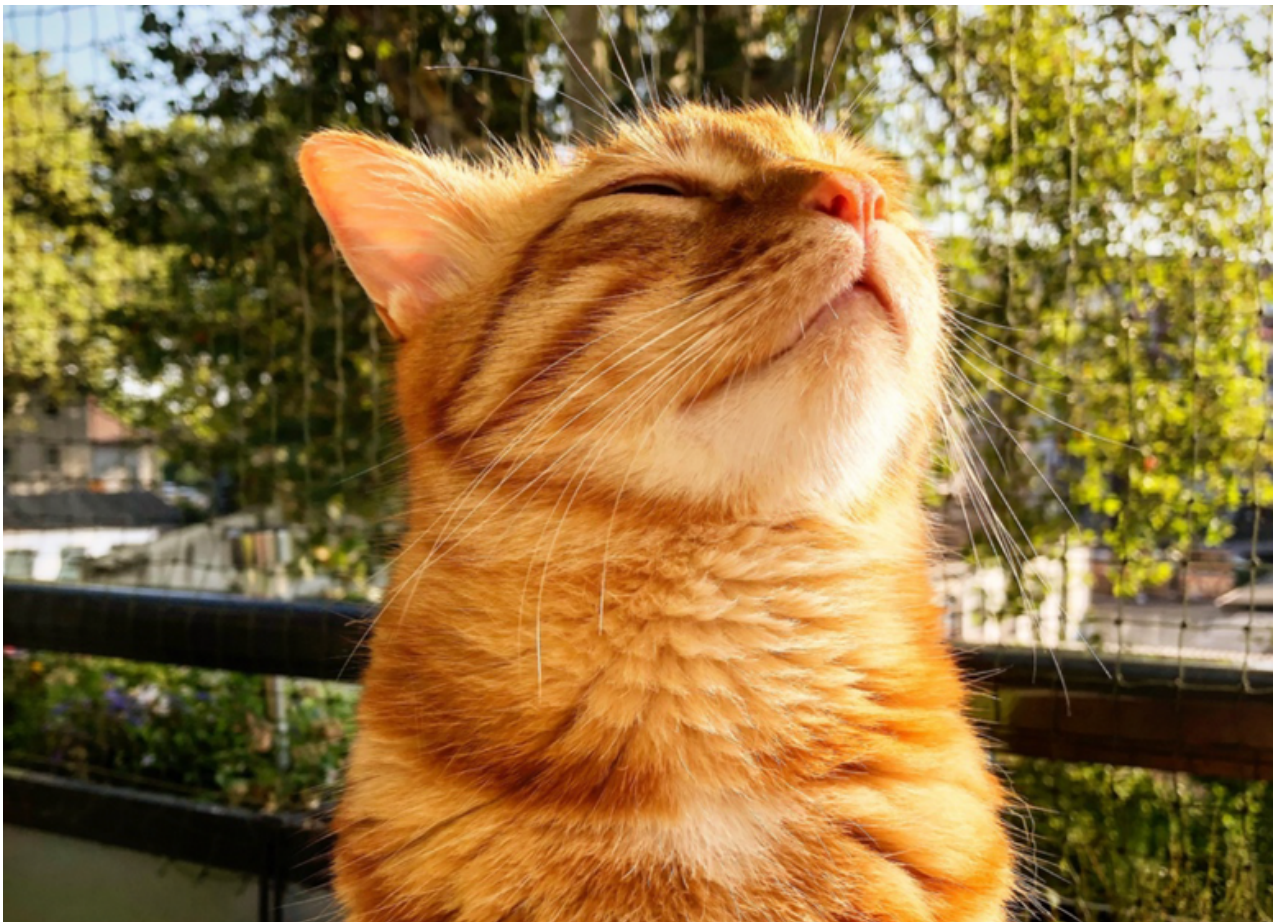
As we're sure you're aware, cats love to scratch surfaces to keep their claws in good condition! But you may not know that they also scratch to make themselves feel more secure in their environment as well as mark their presence to other cats?

Cats may like to scratch on both vertical and horizontal surfaces so providing both options will be real treat for your cat. An old tree stump or large branch placed can provide a good scratching post and/or perching/resting place.



Some tips to help your cat settle into their wonderful new cat-friendly outdoor space:

- A great way to spend time bonding with your cat is to simply sit with them in your outside space. Many cats will benefit from these types of 'low-intensity' interaction with you and may enjoy your near-by company while they relax outdoors.
- For friendly cats that don't enjoy lots of regular long stroking sessions or being picked up, this type of interaction can be particularly beneficial!
- You could also take toys into your outdoor space to play with your cat. This is another good way to interact with and positively stimulate your cat without the need for direct handling.
- A very important point to note is that spending time with your cat in your outside space could encourage them to stay closer to home and not to roam as far when they are outside – helping to keep them safe.
- Playing with your cat in your outside space could distract them from hunting live prey, and possibly keep them away from wildlife – although there is no guarantee!



How to deter other cats from your outdoor kitty haven

An unfortunate side effect of making your outside space irresistible to your cat is that other cats from your neighbourhood may be just as keen to spend time in there too! This may be especially the case in areas with high populations of cats and where there are limited amounts of outdoor green space available.

This is quite stressful for many cats because an intruder cat may be perceived as a direct threat to your cat's territory and personal safety. There are no easy solutions to this problem, but the below pointers could help you and your cat:

- Provide your cat with lots of safe places (as mentioned above) in different locations around the outside space.
- Your cat should always be able to retreat to the safety of their home so you should install a microchip cat flap to ensure that intruder cats can never actually get into your house if your cat retreats to it.
- You could leave small piles of your cat's poo in prominent places like on the wall or steps to signal to other cats that this territory belongs to your cat – and hopefully deter them from coming in.
- Another option is to use high fencing around the periphery of your outside space which can help to set a physical boundary that your cat can easily patrol and mark. If you wanted to be more proactive in keeping other cats out, you could attach cat rollers to the top of your fence (a) or attach a barrier kit (b).



a) Cat fence roller



b) Cat barrier kit

Catios/enclosed patio

If you're unable to provide a safe enclosed outside space for your cat then a catio will be a real game changer!

A catio is a space that you can make for cats (and which you can share with them!) by enclosing your existing patio or creating an enclosure. Within it, you can offer great vertical spaces, wooden objects that they can scratch on, maybe a water feature, different grasses or other kitty-safe plants. Your cat can even hunt the odd critter that makes its way inside the enclosure.

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Catios come in all sizes, pre-made or DIY versions, so whatever your budget or however much outside space you have, you can find one to suit you and your cat!



Window Boxes

These are kits that fit your window like an air conditioner unit that allows your cats to enjoy the sights, sounds and smells. They'll also be able to enjoy the summer breeze or a lazy afternoon in the sun! Getting in the window box can become a wonderful hangout spot!



Conclusion

We hope you've found this brief guide useful and a source of inspiration for creating your perfect outdoor kitty haven, regardless of how much outdoor space you have! As we said earlier, it doesn't matter whether you have a garden, yard, roof terrace or balcony, there is always a way to make the outdoor space you do have just purrfect for your feline friend!

