



Cat Adopter Tips: Marking and Spraying

Cats need to mark their scent around their home to feel safe and comfortable, especially when they're new to the space or when something changes. They have scent glands which leave behind their own unique scent - though we cannot smell it - which increases their comfort and feeling of being "at home" in your house. Marking has many forms, including scratching on objects and rubbing against your legs when you get home. Unfortunately, sometimes their scent glands aren't enough, and they begin using urine to mark instead!

Appropriate Marking

Since cats need to mark, it's helpful to give them plenty of allowed options! Cats will feel good if they have a few places to scratch, are encouraged to rub their cheeks and tail along corners and people, and always have a place to hide to get a deep sleep. Check out our Scratching and Claws tips to prevent unwanted damage to your furniture.

Litter Box Issues

Remember that spraying is different from emptying the bladder. Cats who choose to empty their bladder away from the litter box are usually avoiding the litter box itself. Maybe something near the box is scaring them, such as a loud machine or another pet, or they are in pain when they urinate and associate it with the box. Take them to the vet for a urine test to find out what may be causing pain, and check out our Kitty Litter tips for more info on helping your cat want to use their box!

If your cat suffers from a diagnosed bladder illness, check out our Bare Necessities handout for tips on how to stay hydrated!

Spraying

Spraying is when your cat squirts a little urine behind them while standing up and holding their tail high. Instead of finding urine in a puddle on the floor, you'll find it about a foot up on the wall or furniture – though if this is right next to the litter box, then try giving them a hooded/covered box for a quick fix. Cats usually spray in communal areas like the living room or bedroom when they feel insecure, especially when they aren't comfortable around another pet or person in their home. Call PAWS to talk through the situation and learn how to help them feel more at ease!

If all else fails

If you've tried everything above and nothing has helped your pet's inappropriate urination, consider that re-homing your pet may be the right choice for them. Sometimes certain animals simply don't want to live around other pets, children, or certain adults. Change is hard for cats, and some simply can't feel safe with frequent changes to their environment. If you feel it is necessary to re-home your pet, check out the links on our resources page or call PAWS for help.