

Keeping Your Cat Safe and Sound

Should I let my cat roam outside?

For safety reasons, many people today decide to keep their cats as indoor pets. There are many risks outdoors that can shorten your cat's lifespan. He could be hit by a car, poisoned, attacked by a dog or other animal, or infected with an incurable virus. However, many cats really enjoy being outdoors and miss the stimulation of the natural world if they are kept inside all the time.



There are several different ways that you can allow your cat to enjoy the outdoors without the risk. You can install perches on windowsills around the house so that your cat can sit at the window, watch the outdoors, and enjoy the sunlight. With patience, you can teach your cat to walk with a harness or leash, and then you can take him outdoors for walks.

Another option is to build an outdoor enclosure (often called a cattery) for your cat. Prefab catteries and cattery building plans are available on the Internet by searching for "cat enclosures." At www.cdpets.com, for example, you can buy a prefab cattery. Another popular way to give your cat the freedom of the outdoors is with Cat Fence-In (www.cاتفencein.com), a product that makes it impossible for cats to climb over regular backyard fencing.

What else can I do to keep my cat safe and sound?

Some other responsibilities of taking care of a cat are:

- Make sure your cat always has a current I.D. tag on his collar, even if you have an indoor cat. There's always the chance that she could escape from the house and be found wandering alone. It's also a good idea to have a microchip ID implanted.
- Spay/neuter your cat. Again, even if you have an indoor cat, he or she could get out by mistake. Spay/neuter not only prevents unwanted animals from being born, it helps animals lead happier, healthier lives.
- Take care of your cat's health by bringing her to the vet for annual checkups. Be aware that your cat may require more medical checkups and medication as she ages.

When you take an animal as a pet, it is your responsibility to stay committed to your loyal companion for a lifetime – through thick and thin, through whatever changes occur in your life. If you absolutely must find a new home for your pet, it is also your responsibility to find a home that is as good as or better than your own.