

WHAT THE HECK IS KITTEN PROOFING?

If you are considering adopting a new kitten there are some things you had better consider. First, kittens are bundles of energy and you will need to channel it into the proper direction. Secondly, you will have to prepare your home for the new addition!



Kittens, just like any other type of baby, will get into anything and everything! This happens in only a brief moment of time when you least expect it or when your back is turned. Part of the development of any small child or animal is to explore. They do this through climbing, crawling, jumping, mouthing, pawing, and other creative ways.

Kitten proofing is preventing accidents through preventative measure or increased awareness and supervision. If you know what types of things to be careful about, that is half the battle. Be sure to provide the proper toys and lots of concentrated activity.

Kittens will make toys out of just about anything. The best efforts you can make are to provide the proper toys and to supervise the play to make sure that the kitten does not ingest any foreign objects. Ping pong balls, hard vinyl or plastic balls, fake mice are good to start with. Paper bags left open on the floor, boxes, and milk jug "rip-rings" are a few of the best homemade toys.

Care should be taken to supervise play with string and aluminum balls. A kitten's rough tongue guides string and yarn down the throat, and makes it tough for the kitten to stop swallowing. String can wrap itself through the intestines of a cat and lead to a painful death. Small aluminum balls can be swallowed.

Do not forget to rotate toys. Like any child, the thrill is in the newness, and as the kitten matures, new games will emerge with some of the old favorite toys.

SOME AREAS OF CONCERN:

Electrical cords: Exploring and mouthing is common. To prevent an electrical shock, cords can be covered with PVC piping, hidden, placed out of reach (remember - a kitten grows!), or coated with "bitter apple" or a light coating of Tabasco sauce.

Plastic: Trash cans, kitchen baggies, dry cleaning bags and other assorted plastics are trouble. Some cats like to chew on plastic. It is suggested that the materials that make the plastic make it tasty to some cats. Some cats like to urinate on plastic. The sound appears to be tempting. Put temptation out of reach.

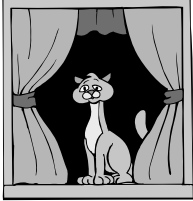
Cleaning Supplies: Take care that cleaning fluids and powders are kept closed and locked in cabinets. Kittens often find new and inventive ways to open cupboards, drawers and other small storage spaces. Spilled materials and cleaning cloths should be cleaned up or stored in secure areas.

Pest Poisons: Snail and ant bait are deadly, as is antifreeze, and many things found in the common trash can. These smell very attractive, and can kill.

Appliances: Refrigerators, dishwashers, clothes washers, and dryers have been death traps to more than just a few animals. Keeping doors and lids closed and blocking access to little cubby holes in the backs of appliances can keep you kitten safe. Check appliances BEFORE you turn them on, or make sure you have located your kitten. Please pay attention to cooking surfaces, hot irons, candles, and fire places. It only takes a moment for disaster!

Bathroom: Kittens explore everywhere. A tub of water can mean death even though the kitten can swim. The smooth walls of the tub don't allow it to climb out. Exhaustion and drowning are the

result. Keep the bathroom door shut when filling the tub and do not leave large buckets of water unattended at any time. Keep the toilet seat lid down. Also, keep in mind that shredding and spreading toilet paper is a favorite pastime of many kittens. Do not let this become a habit, and you will not have shredded paper in every corner of your house!



Window Screens: If you live in an upper story apartment or condominium, you may want to make sure that your windows have screens that are secured and that can withstand the weight of a cat climbing or pushing on them. Cats love to watch events from the window sill and keeping them safe from falls is easy if you take a few minutes to add a few more securing latches. Even if you live in a single story dwelling, keeping the windows and screens secure keeps your kitten safely inside and animal intruders out.

Sun spots and Breakables: Cats will always find great places to sun themselves. This can include not only window sills, but tables, chairs, and other ledges or surfaces that catch the sunlight. Caution should be taken if you have numerous collectibles or breakable objects set out for decoration. Placement of these precious items in other areas where they might not be at such high risk is recommended!

Plants: Household plants could face some interesting challenges. Sometimes they can be used as scratching posts, litter box substitutes, or chew toys. There are many plants that are toxic to cats. Any reputable vet can give you a list of these. They are also available on the web. Cover the soil in large pots with stone, pine cones, or marbles to prevent its use as a litter box. Sprayed Christmas trees are a very notorious killer. Chewing on the pine needles can be deadly.

Curtains and Fabric: Curtains and cloth furniture tend to make great climbing ladders for small kittens, as do the occasional pant legs. Teach your kitten to use a cat tree and have a variety of scratching posts placed in strategic locations to lesson the temptation to use, the wrong things to climb. Rewarding acceptable behavior should start young. Remember yelling at the kitten will only teach it not to get caught - it will not stop the activity you are reprimanding. Take the kitten to the appropriate scratching, place and show him what to do. Always supply a toy to wrestle with - NEVER your hand.



**Take a look - your home is full of fun things for kittens.
But not all of them are safe, appropriate toys.**

STRAYS HALFWAY HOUSE

"A Team For Life"

(630) 351-3150

www.strayshh.org