

# Keeping your cat happy and healthy at home



This project has been assisted by the NSW Government through its Environmental Trust.

## Did you know...

- 🐾 **A cat kept safe at home will live on average 10 years longer** than a cat allowed to roam.
- 🐾 **Trauma is the leading cause of death for pet cats**; 2 in 3 cat owners have lost a cat to a roaming related accident.
- 🐾 **The average outdoor cat roams an area of 2 hectares.** One domestic cat tracked over 24 hours travelled almost 4 km, visited 16 different backyards, crossed three roads, and explored a bushland reserve at night.
- 🐾 **Old cats can learn new tricks!** Cats are very adaptable. They don't need to roam away from home to be content. You can provide everything they need at home.
- 🐾 **More than 50% of cats in NSW already enjoy the safe-at-home lifestyle.**
- 🐾 **A single roaming pet cat in Australia is estimated to kill 115 native mammals, birds and reptiles each year.** But don't be fooled by what your cat brings home – on average that's less than one fifth of what they catch.
- 🐾 **Cats with bells still kill native wildlife.** They learn to stalk prey silently. Also, animals don't always associate the sound of a bell with danger.
- 🐾 **Cats don't only hunt at night.** A cat kept in overnight will shift their hunting behaviour to daytime hours when they will hunt lizards and birds.
- 🐾 **Well-fed cats still hunt wildlife** due to their hunting instinct.



# Keeping your cat healthy and happy at home

Cats can live happily at home without roaming, as long as they have food and water, a litter tray and lots of enrichment such as climbing and scratching poles, toys and of course your love and attention.

If your cat has enjoyed being outside for many years, you can slowly increase their time indoors over an extended period.

## Cats at home are safe from:



**CARS.** Cats can be injured or killed. Less than 1 in 3 cats will survive a car accident.

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**CAT FIGHTS.** Fights can lead to injuries and infections and may transmit diseases such as feline immunodeficiency virus.

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**DOGS.** Cats can be killed or seriously injured in dog attacks.

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**WILDLIFE.** Reduce the risk to your cat from snakes and paralysis ticks and prevent your cat from hunting wildlife.

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**GETTING LOST.** Less than 10% of lost cats in NSW are reunited with their owners.



## Ways to entertain your cat at home:

- 🐾 **High resting places:** Cats love to perch up high as it allows them to survey their surroundings and makes them feel secure.
- 🐾 **Enclosed spaces:** Cats love to hide. It allows them to get away from people and other animals.
- 🐾 **Bedding:** Cats like to spend a lot of time sleeping and resting in quiet areas where they feel safe and secure.
- 🐾 **Toys and activities:** Provide a window perch, play tunnel, empty cardboard boxes for your cat. Leave a few ping pong balls around – including one in the bathtub!



**⚠️ WARNING:** Avoid an expensive vet bill and **DO NOT** leave string, ribbon, or plastic bags out for your cat to play with while unsupervised.



## How to give your cat time outdoors

- 🐾 **Take your cat for a walk.** It's not for every cat, but, some cats can be trained to enjoy walking with a harness and lead.
- 🐾 **Install cat proof fencing around your yard.** Designed to prevent your cat scaling the fence and an ideal option for people with small yards.
- 🐾 **Install an outdoor enclosure.** Enclosures come in many shapes and sizes, from simple netting around your patio, to a free standing enclosure in your garden.

There are many ready-to-install enclosures and accessories, or why not build one yourself?

Visit [catnets.com.au](https://catnets.com.au) for inspiration

**“The more time a cat spends safe at home, the less risk of injury or death from road accidents, fighting, and disease. A cat kept safe at home can live up to four times longer than a cat left to roam.”**

– Australian Veterinary Association

## Desexing facts

- ❁ Stops unwanted litters.
- ❁ Reduces unwanted behaviour such as spraying, marking, fighting, yowling and roaming.
- ❁ Increases your cat's life expectancy.
- ❁ Undesexed females spray and seek males when 'in season'.
- ❁ Undesexed female cats often yowl, roll on the floor, and are agitated until let outside when 'in season'.
- ❁ Undesexed male cats fight over females which may lead to injury, infection and disease.



## Microchipping

A microchip is a small, permanent electronic ID tag inserted by needle under the skin between your cat's shoulder blades. The procedure is quick, safe, easy, and side effects are very uncommon.

Microchipping your cat will make it easier to quickly reunite you with your pet in the event your cat becomes lost.

⚠ In NSW all cats over the age of four months must be microchipped, desexed and registered.

Visit our website for more information, encouragement, inspiration, and to sign up to our community of cat lovers keeping their cats safe at home.

[rspcansw.org.au/keeping-cats-safe](https://rspcansw.org.au/keeping-cats-safe)