

OUTSIDE TIME FOR INDOOR CATS

It's widely accepted that indoor cats live longer than their outdoor counterparts. Outdoor cats face potentially fatal threats from every direction - cars, roaming dogs, poison, coyotes, antifreeze, hawks, leg hold traps, diseases and injuries that they can contract from their own kind, including feline distemper, FIV, feline infectious peritonitis, upper respiratory infections, heartworm, abscesses and more. This is not to mention the less deadly but still problematic fleas, ticks and internal parasites to which felines can play host. Here are some creative tips to give Furry his quality outside exposure without risking life and paw.



Keep it Simple

Open a Window or Door: As long as the windows screens are solidly in place, this simple solution allows Furry to enjoy many of the benefits of the outdoors with none of the risks, and requires little effort. Lying on a window sill, Furry can watch and hear the birds, soak up sunlight, and feel the soft breeze ruffle through his fur.

Install a Window Box or Sill: Numerous easy-to-install commercial products will enhance Furry's window-basking experience. A carpeted ledge gives him a wider, comfortable perch from which to survey his kingdom. An actual window box fits inside a regular window and extends out from the house, giving a greater sense of being outside and a wider view of his world. Birds and bugs sometimes even land on top of the window box, giving Furry a vicarious predatory thrill.

Take Furry for Walks on a Leash: This is surprisingly do-able for some cats, and significantly expands Furry's horizons. Many cats adapt well to walking on leash and can even be trained to heel. Some cats hate the whole leash concept and will not have anything at all to do with it. If Furry is four paws against it, then this is not the best way to provide outside time for him.

Make it Sublime

Build an Attached Cattery: Create a wooden frame and cover it with sturdy woven wire fencing with a 1/2" x 1" mesh. Build the structure 7 feet high for ease of cleaning, and install a cat door in the sliding door. Install several wooden benches at various heights so Furry can make use of the vertical space.

Add a Cat Tube: Attach sections of sturdy 8” wide plastic pipe together to allow Furry free access to different areas. Cats love these tunnels so much that they spend as much time playing in it as they do getting from one place to another.

Fence the Yard: There are several options for fencing a yard. One product, *Cat Fence-In* is a sturdy, attractive and effective means of keeping cats confined in an already fenced yard.

Accessories

Bring the outdoors to indoor Furry. Allow sunbeams and fresh air to enter through securely screened windows and doors. Maintain fish in an aquarium or birds in a cage for his viewing pleasure—but out of his reach in case he has predatory tendencies. Purchase a bird video to play for Furry and to satisfy his bird watching urges. Satisfy Furry’s herbivore habits by growing greens for him to munch indoors.

By choosing to provide Furry with safe outdoor experiences enriches his quality of life while also ensuring his life lasts as long as possible.