

Cat Owners Beware: Ignoring These 10 Home Hazards Can Be Fatal

You're so excited to bring home your new kitty. But watch out - kittens can be sneaky and mischievous pets and they need you to protect them, especially when young. Check your home against this list to make sure that your beloved pet avoids harmful or deadly accidents.

Analysis by Dr. Karen Shaw Becker

STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- Your new kitten is a completely endearing fluffball of energy who needs your help to make it safely to adulthood. By following a few simple tips for kitten-proofing your home, you can insure your tiny charge grows into a healthy adult cat
- In order to keep kitty safe, you'll want to locate all possible hiding spots in your home so you know where to look when you can't find her. You'll also need to remove all potential escape routes from the house, put away all breakables, and secure any dangling cords and other enticements
- Make sure you have no plants that are poisonous to cats in your home, and hide toys your kitten could hurt himself with in your absence. Add child-proof latches to drawers and cabinet doors to discourage a determined kitten. Wind up all cords from draperies and blinds and keep washer and dryer doors closed
- Other tips: keep toilet seats down and all medications out of reach of your kitten

Editor's Note: This article is a reprint. It was originally published January 05, 2015.

Kittens are among the most delightful little creatures on the planet. They're tiny and silly and essentially helpless ... which is why you, as the "mom" or "dad" of your sweet little bundle of fluff, must protect her from herself.

By following a few simple suggestions, you can keep your kitten safe from harm, and your home and belongings safe from kitty-damage.

10 Ways to Kitten-Proof Your Home

1. **Learn your household's hideouts** — Kittens are not only curious little beings, but their bodies are fantastically flexible. This means your little one will very likely find and squeeze herself into spots in your home you may not know exist. Cats like small, dark, out-of-the-way places. While your kitty can be easily spotted if she's concealing herself under your bed, you might think you've lost her for real if she finds a cleverer place to hide.

It's a good idea before leaving the house to say good-bye to kitty so you can lay eyes on her and reassure yourself she isn't trapped in a shoebox in your closet or a dresser drawer. As much as possible, limit her access

to potentially unsafe hiding spots when you're not at home. And when you're at home and about to run the clothes washer or dryer, check carefully first to insure kitty isn't in either machine.



2. **Eliminate escape routes to the outdoors** — All the windows and doors in your home should close and latch securely, and screens should fit snugly in their frames. Your kitten may see something outside he wants to investigate, and many a cat has launched himself against a loose screen and made a quick getaway.

Obviously, this goes double if you don't live on the ground floor. During the warmer months of the year, thanks to a phenomenon known as Feline High Rise Syndrome, city dwelling cats routinely fall from open windows and fire escapes, often necessitating a trip to an emergency veterinary clinic.

3. **Put away anything you don't want broken** — Cats are gifted climbers and explorers, but their considerable acrobatic skills can't be counted on to prevent a disaster. If you have fragile collectibles on open shelves in your home, you might want to put them away until kitty is a bit older. Not only could she knock something precious and breakable off a shelf by accident, she might also decide to play swatty-cake with your expensive stemware or the ceramic angel your daughter made for you at summer camp.
4. **If it's dangling, it's a cat toy** — The most potentially hazardous household "danglers" are electrical cords and drawcords on window coverings. You want to prevent your kitten from chewing electrical cords by any means available, and drawcords on drapes, curtains, or blinds can present both a choking and hanging hazard.

You might also want to raise your window coverings well above floor level while your kitten is learning to use his OWN scratching and climbing surfaces.



5. **Remove poisonous plants from your home** — Most kittens and adult cats will sample whatever greenery and flowers come into their domain. You'll want to know the **plants that are poisonous to cats** (there's a long list) and make sure they're not in your home. You may also want to find places for safe plants that kitty can't get to ... unless you like the look of partially chewed greenery!
6. **Some toys require adult supervision** — As long as you're right there to watch him, it's fine to let your kitten play with yarn, string, or ribbon. But it's important to keep those items out of reach when you're not around, as they can be a choking risk if kitty chews or swallows them.
7. **Secure cabinet doors and drawers** — If you've ever had feline housemates, you probably know that some cats have a knack for opening drawers and cabinets to see what's inside. Unless your kitten will be constantly supervised, it's a good idea to install childproof latches to prevent her from breaking and entering into an area where cleaning supplies or other toxic chemicals are stored. If that's not possible, I definitely recommend you move all those types of products to an area of your home that your cat doesn't have access to.



8. **Keep toilet seats down** — One of the quirkiest behaviors of some cats is a fascination with water (often only water that is NOT in their water bowl). Some cats also develop a strange obsession with toilet bowl water, so to protect your little guy or gal from an unexpected dunking or worse, it's a good idea for everyone in the family to develop the habit of keeping the toilet seat down.

This could also be a lifesaver if the water in the bowl happens to contain cleaning chemicals.

9. **Keep all medications out of reach** — All medications in your home should be kept where your kitten can't get to them. If you're in the habit of leaving pill bottles on your kitchen or bathroom counter, it's time to move them to a secure spot, because a determined kitten can chew through a plastic bottle.

It's also important to immediately pick up any pills accidentally dropped on the floor before kitty finds them.



10. **Give kitty her own outdoor hangout** — As long as your kitten is immunized against disease, she can go outdoors on a harness and leash, or into her own outdoor enclosure or catio. This will allow your kitten to enjoy the great outdoors (preferably with her paws on the ground as often as possible) in nice weather, which can prevent boredom and enrich her environment in a meaningful way. If you choose not to vaccinate your cat, please keep her inside.

Sources and References

[PawNation May 29, 2014](#)
