5 Ways to Discourage Cat Spraying

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Cat owners sometimes confuse urine spraying with urinating, even though the behaviors are quite different. Urine spraying is a normal, innate territory-marking behavior that has nothing to do with your cat's sanitation. Though both male and female cats will spray, the behavior is most common in non-neutered males, and in multi-cat households. The spraying of urine on drapes, furniture, and other surfaces is your cat's way of identifying territory or covering the scent of other cats. While this behavior is normal, it can and should be prevented to keep your home odor free.

Do not confuse urine spraying with eliminating outside of the litter box. If your cat urinates outside of her litter box, leaving a puddle or a large carpet stain, you should call your veterinarian immediately. She may have a urinary tract infection, cystitis that needs to be treated as soon as possible. Or, as mentioned above, she may be marking territory by spraying.

Here are a few suggestions for controlling spraying:

1. **Have your cat spayed/neutered by the time she is six months old.** In addition to the many other good reasons to have your cat neutered, more than 90% of cats will not start spraying if they are fixed before the behavior begins.
2. **Restrict her view of the outdoors.** If your cat sees another cat, her natural response will be to mark her territory... your home. Move furniture away from windows, pull the drapes, or cover the lower portion of your window. You might also provide a well-located, cat tree or play area to refocus attention.
3. **If you have more than one cat, foster a positive relationship among them.** Cats that get along are less competitive, and are therefore far less likely to spray. Play with your cats together, and give each one equal attention. Have them eat and sleep together. Encourage them to groom each other by wiping them down with a damp cloth.
4. **Reduce stress in your cat by keeping things routine.** Changes of any kind in your household can create anxiety, for example, new cats in the area, new people, or re-decorating. Feed your cat at the same time each day, and keep her litter box and bed in their respective places. When people visit, put your cat in a separate room, particularly if your visitors have cats of their own and may carry in their scent. Feliway Spray, or Comfort Zone Plug-in with Feliway, contains a pheromone-like substance designed to help calm cats, can be used for cats under stress, or when you think planned events might foster anxiety.

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If your cat does spray, thoroughly clean the area to prevent re-marking. We recommend OdorLogic® CleanAway Pet Stain & Odor Remover or Stainaway that uses natural enzymes to devour odor-causing bacteria instead of covering up its scent.

5. **SSSCAT Spray and No-Scratch! Spray** repel your cat with unpleasant essences, so your cat will avoid treated surfaces or your houseplants. They can be used to keep your pet away from selected areas, furniture, and drapes, which may help disrupt the undesirable pattern of behavior.

Spraying is definitely a problem you don't have to live with. Whenever you spot spraying or recognize its signs, the sooner you take action the better.

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