

DEALING WITH ESCAPE ARTISTS



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We understand that it's one thing to say you want to keep your cat inside, but quite another to deal with a cat that constantly, relentlessly tries to get outside. Here are some tips for dealing with those escape artists:



It's likely you greet your cat when you come in, and kitty is right there waiting for you. Now **you have to make the area around the door somewhere your cat never gets attention**. Hellos and goodbyes need to take place away from that space.



Create a new space on the other side of the room, a place where your cat will enjoy sitting, perhaps a perch, chair or a cat tree, with her favourite treats stored nearby. Train her to go to that spot by calling her name and rewarding her with a treat when she arrives.

When you come in the door, don't greet the cat until you've reached that new space. Then lavish her with attention and a treat. Soon enough she'll be jumping up there as soon as she hears your key rattle in the lock.



If you're having trouble teaching your cat that the doorway is not a good place, you can try another deterrent. **Every time your cat accompanies you to the door, yell and make noise (smack the door with a rolled up newspaper or even a pot)**. It teaches your cat that the door is not a fun place after all, and her hesitation may well buy you valuable time in the future.



You can also use smell to keep the cat away from the door zone. **Cats dislike citrus smells**, so diluted orange or lemon juice sprayed around the bottom of the door may help.



But that doesn't necessarily do much for you when you're trying to go out the door. **So the next step is to introduce a puzzle feeder / toy before you head out**. Go to her new space, and entice the kitty to join you by offering her a treat. Once she's away from the door, give her the puzzle toy – stuffed with a treat to enhance its distraction value – to keep her busy while you leave.



Make sure your cat has a rich environment. Read our resources on making sure cats have sufficient stimulation, or creating a safe outdoor environment for your cat.



Finally, if you do have an escape artist, **make sure he or she wears a collar or is microchipped, and that you have a good, recent photograph**. All increase your chances of having your cat returned home safely if they do manage to get out.