Making the space enriching

Safe containment is about more than preventing a cat from leaving the property - it is also about creating an enjoyable environment:

- Climbing structures and raised platforms provide opportunities to climb and observe
- Scratching surfaces support natural scratching behaviour
- Hiding places offer a sense of security and choice
- Toys and opportunities for interactive play provide stimulation.

A thoughtfully prepared outdoor environment can help contained cats remain active, curious and comfortable, including cats that previously spent much of their time outdoors.

Scan code to view ACA's Cat Ownership Policy.

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EXPLORE OUTDOOR CONTAINMENT OPTIONS

Cat containment doesn't have to mean giving up the outdoors. With the right set-up, cats can still enjoy fresh air, sunshine, exploration and enrichment - safely within their home environment.

An Animal Care Australia initiative.

Getting started: finding the right solution

Every home, cat and household is different, so there is no single approach to cat containment that suits everyone. Consider the space you have available, whether you own or rent, your cat's age, personality, mobility and the lifestyle they have been used to, as well as the budget you can comfortably afford. Some cats may benefit from a dedicated outdoor enclosure, while others may enjoy a secure backyard or a smaller portable space. Starting with a solution that suits both you and your cat makes it easier to create a safe, enjoyable outdoor experience that can become part of everyday life.

Remember: shade, shelter, comfortable resting spots and access to fresh water are important to maintaining your cat's health and safety.

Portable enclosures and smaller spaces

Portable enclosures offer a flexible way to provide safe outdoor access where space is limited or permanent modifications aren't practical, such as in apartments, courtyards or rental properties. Depending on their design, enclosures may be free-standing, foldable or portable. They can provide opportunities for fresh air, sunshine, sights, sounds and relaxation without allowing cats to roam freely. Choose an enclosure that is secure, stable, appropriately sized and protected from weather extremes, and ensure your cat has comfortable resting areas and suitable enrichment within the space which offers shade, can be very enriching.



Cat-proof fencing and netting

Cat-proof fencing and netting can help transform an existing backyard into a secure outdoor area for cats. Depending on the property, this may involve adapting existing fences or installing a purpose-designed system which prevents cats escaping. This approach can give cats more space to move around, explore, sunbathe and spend time with their family, while allowing them to remain safely within their home environment.

Catios and outdoor enclosures

A catio or outdoor enclosure is a securely enclosed space that allows cats to experience the outdoors without roaming beyond the property. Enclosures can range from small structures attached to a window or doorway to larger spaces with room to climb, play and explore. They allow cats to enjoy sunshine, fresh air and interesting sights, sounds and smells, while reducing exposure to dangers of traffic, fights with other cats, diseases and getting lost. For cats who are used to spending time outdoors, a well-designed enclosure, which offers shade, can be very enriching.