

Keeping your cats safely confined to your property.

THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO KEEP YOUR CATS SAFELY AND HAPPILY ON YOUR PROPERTY TO PREVENT THEM:

- Becoming lost or impounded,
- Being injured or killed in a road accident,
- Being attacked by a dog,
- Fighting with another cat and getting nasty abscesses or diseases like FIV (cat AIDS),
- Causing neighbour complaints,
- Harming native wildlife.



Animal Welfare
League Qld
Est. 1999

COMMUNITY CAT PROGRAM
Protecting people, cats & wildlife





1 INDOORS ALL THE TIME

Some cats can be happy staying indoors day and night. Perhaps your cat has lived indoors since it was a kitten. Maybe you have an adult cat that prefers the comforts of home and roaming is not an issue. Perhaps you have an adventurous cat who likes to explore the outdoors and you would like to transition them to a life indoors instead. **An indoor life is great way to keep your cats and wildlife safe!** You can help train your cat to stay indoors by:

- Keeping doors and windows or screens closed. Ensure everyone in the household (including visitors) is aware that the cat needs to be kept indoors.
- Providing company, playtime, enrichment toys, scratching posts, choices of cosy places to sleep, sunlight, and places to sit up high and look out during the day.
- Regularly cleaning litter trays (preferably 2 per cat). Having a clean place to toilet will reduce stress for your cat, and their desire to return outdoors to toilet in inappropriate places, like your neighbour's garden. If cleaning litter trays is a concern, some automated cleaning options are available - see reviews on YouTube.
- Feed your cat two to three times a day with only the amount of calories required, then if your cat does escape, it is more likely to come back before night-time (see feeding recommendations Option 5). This type of meal feeding is also healthier for cats rather than "bowl always full" feeding, because it helps prevent obesity.

SOME CATS CAN BE DIFFICULT TO KEEP INDOORS!

If keeping your cats inside full-time is **just too hard**, there are **plenty of other ways to keep them safe and happy!**



2 ENCLOSING A DECK OR BALCONY**

Add mesh or netting to enclose your deck or balcony so your cat can remain safe and still enjoy the fresh air. Some examples are below*:

- [Cat Proofing a Balcony with No Roof for Less than \\$30](#) (using chicken wire and netting, this method does not change the structure of the balcony and is easily removable, if renting)
- [Kelly's Rambling Renovation: I built a Catio \(Cat Patio\) on my balcony deck for my furry friends!](#) (using a wooden frame and steel mesh, this method also does not change the structure of the balcony, if renting the property, and can be taken down when you move)

***Renters, please consult with your landlord beforehand.*



3 OUTDOOR ENCLOSURES

You can build outdoor enclosures with access to the house, so cats can come and go as they like. These enclosures can be simple, as long as they are attractive to cats, with perhaps a sunny warm place for winter, some cool shady places for summer, and shelves to climb and places to explore and play. See examples below**:

- [DIY Inexpensive Outdoor Cat House](#) (accessed through a window, this small enclosure uses a wooden frame and steel mesh and is explained really well for inexperienced DIY builders)
- [DIY Catio – Step by Step Building Caste for Tazz](#) (a cat walkway, made of timber, mesh and fake grass, wraps around the walls of the house and is built in stages, to eventually lead to a larger cat enclosure)
- [Our Cat Enclosure](#) (A timber and wire mesh extensive cat walkway accessible from the house via a cat door. This film does not show how it was built but shows how to make them attractive to cats with a good location, catnip and scratching posts and shelves for sitting or sunbaking.)
- Commercial cat enclosures are also available and can be designed and built for you. Search for suppliers of cat mesh and builders of cat enclosures on the web.



4 FENCE ATTACHMENTS

You can install fence attachments to give your cat access to part, or all, of your yard and stop your cat leaping over the fence. The following video links* provide some basic low-cost home-made options, as well as a commercially available roller fence attachment:

- [How to keep your cats from climbing a fence](#) (using plastic sheeting at the top)
- [Our Cat Fence](#) (using taut mesh and wooden brackets)
- [Building a Better Cat Fence](#) (using loose plastic mesh and wooden dowels)
- [Commercially-produced cat fence rollers](#) to stop your cat getting a pawhold on the top of your 6 foot or higher fence and stop other cats jumping into your yard.



5 WALK ON A LEAD AND HARNESS

Some cats can be trained to walk on a lead and harness. It takes time and gradual short training sessions, first indoors until the cat gets used to it, then in the yard, and finally in the wider community as long as the cat feels safe. It is easiest if training starts when a kitten, but it can be done. Here's an example of [instructional videos](#) available online.



6 INDOORS AT NIGHT

While keeping cats contained to your yard all the time is safer for your cat, confinement at night is essential. Night-time is the most dangerous time for cats as they roam further and are more likely to fight with other cats, be attacked by dogs, and injured or killed by cars. Help keep your cat safe at night by using **strategic feeding** to keep them indoors from dusk to dawn:

- Feed one-third of their daily food in the morning, one-third at dusk, and the last third when you go to bed.
- Close windows, screens and doors before the dusk meal is fed to prevent your cat from leaving the house after it has eaten. This is a great time to bond with your cat providing lap-time and company.



7 INVISIBLE FENCE SYSTEM** ***

If your cat is desperate to wander and you have tried other containment options without success, electronic boundary fencing (also called invisible or hidden fencing) may be an option, especially if you have serious concerns e.g. your cat is deaf, you live close to a busy road. Use reputable installers (rather than DIY) to assist in training your pet to adapt to the fence. Your cat wears a special collar, which signals to your cat with an audible noise first, then delivers a safe electrical stimulation if it goes closer to a wire placed around your property. Flags are used as a visible warning to assist your cat in learning where the fence is. See [link](#)

Electronic boundary fence systems are endorsed by most welfare agencies in the USA, but not by some welfare agencies in Australia because of concerns over the welfare impact. A recent UK study found that long-term exposure to an electronic containment system with clear pre-warning was not associated with reduced cat welfare.

Below are some more detailed Australian resources about how to keep cats safe:

- [Keeping Cats Safe: How to Build Cat Safe Fencing and Cat Enclosures](#)
- [Keeping Your Cat Safe and Happy at Home](#)
- [Good Cats Play at Home](#)

Note: All links are provided as ideas only. Please use at your discretion. We cannot accept responsibility for the effectiveness of these examples as each cat and situation will be different.