

# Our Animal Friends

by Martha Norwalk



## What Cats Need: Part 6, Cat Runs

Over the past couple of months I have been explaining how I built outdoor cat runs, attached to the house, so my cats could go outside whenever they pleased and be safe. I have done two cat runs so far. The first one was the largest one, at least 10' by 10', up at my farm. The

second one, I built at my dad's house in the city before I moved in to care for him. It was half the size of the first one.

These runs have been such a success with my cats that I highly recommend them for any spoiled cats, especially those with behav-

ior problems of almost any kind.

I do realize, however, that many cannot afford to build big runs, they don't have the space for one like mine, or for whatever reason, a cat run is just not a possibility. The good news is that I have seen many of my client's cre-

ativity come to life by working with what they have or what works in their environment. I'll tell you about those that I recall.

One of the simplest things to do is to enclose an area that is already there with some type of screening material. For example, use a patio, deck, or balcony. Cat doors for access can be put in walls, doors, windows or sliding glass doors. If you prefer not to enclose an area, you can often secure a fenced area with this: [www.cattencin.com](http://www.cattencin.com)

Several of my clients have converted existing chain link dog runs into cat runs by covering the top. One of them put the cat access door in a window upstairs and added a tunnel on the outside of the house for the cats to get down to the dog run. This was very unique, to say the least, but the cats seemed to be very happy with it.

I have seen several creative window attachments, similar to a green house or bay window except made with wire. Typically, there is a shelf or two for the cat to sit on inside and cats access it through the open window.

There is not a lot of space to move around but the cats seem to love being in the fresh air and watching the world go by.

Years ago, one of my clients used a small dog door, already there in a garage or basement door that opened to the patio. She put a wire dog crate on the outside, attached to the door. The cat learned to go through the little dog door and would just sit in the crate, happy just to be outside.

Another couple with whom I worked came up with a totally different idea that worked. They built a couple of wood framed large boxes, probably about five feet square and about two feet high. They covered the top and sides with wire mesh and left the bottom completely open. They kept one of these contraptions on their deck and the other on the grass in their backyard. Whenever they were outside and the cats wanted to join them, they would carry them out, lift up the box and put the cats inside. Their kitties seemed to love it and would spend hours in their boxes enjoying the out of doors.

If you do not want to build

something like this you can purchase portable mesh cat-walks, tunnels and gazebos for your yard. Check them out at [www.kittywalksystems.com](http://www.kittywalksystems.com).

If outdoor entertainment is not possible for your cat you may want to make your house more attractive and entertaining for them. Check out what these folks have done at [www.thecats-house.com](http://www.thecats-house.com) or even better, track down a copy of their book with great photos and instructions: *The Cats' House* by Bob Walker.

Finally this month, I promised some instruction on teaching cats to walk on harnesses for outdoor walks. I recommend using a Metropolitan Walking Jacket and a small Flexi leash. The jackets come in two sizes and in my opinion are the safest.

Talk to your cat with a great sales pitch like, "Only very special kitties get Walking Jackets and get to go for walks." Explain how great going outside will be etc. Maintain a happy and positive attitude throughout practice.

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## A New Perspective on Weddings

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If you have done the things on this list, you have already removed many significant obstacles.

If everyone that attended a wedding took this responsibility to heart and worked

on the quality of their intentions for the couple, we would see divorce rates drop, and we would see children supported by healthier communities. In the new energy, this spirit of support and cooperation will be the glue

that holds groups together in vibrant community.

The way you think about these unions matters. Your heartfelt desire for the couple to live a long and happy life together is the greatest gift that you have to give.

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