

How to Get Rid of Cat Pee Smell and Un-fur-tunate Stains Around Your Home

By Teresa Traverse | Jan 8, 2019



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You may love your cat, but there's no denying that [pets](#) are prone to making messes. One of the most common complaints of feline owners everywhere? The unbearable smells that can permeate your home. It can be tough to pinpoint where exactly the [stench](#) is coming from, and even tougher to get rid of it. So what's a pet owner to do? You obviously can't get rid of your furry BFF!

Below, everything you every wanted (or never wanted) to know about dealing with pungent cat odors inside your home.

Why does it smell so bad?

Cat urine isn't actually all that different from the urine of other animals. But if it's left uncleaned for a while, it gives off a strong odor due to the urea—a waste product in urine—which breaks down and gives off a powerful ammonia-like odor. Over time, the urine breaks down and emits mercaptans, or the "compounds which also give skunk spray its nasty smell," according to [McGill University](#).

Got it? OK, now here's how to get rid of those odors.

If the stench is coming from the litter box

Litter boxes should be cleaned at least twice a week, if not more. If the box is getting funky, try replacing all the litter or sprinkling some baking soda on top to help neutralize the smell. You can also place it on a hard surface to make cleaning up easier.

The actual litter should be completely replaced at least every 14 days, or more frequently, depending on how often your cat uses it.

Jennie Norris, president and CEO of [StagedHomes.com](https://www.stagedhomes.com), advises cleaning out the litter box with soap and water about once a month. If the box itself smells, and you find that cleaning it doesn't work, it's time to toss it and get a new one.

The key is to keep the litter box clean in the first place; if it gets too full or dirty, your cat will find other places in your home to do its business.

Accidents on carpet or upholstery

If your cat pees on the carpet, blot the stain as soon as possible. Soak up as much as you can, and then apply an enzyme-based cleaner, which can be found at most pet stores.

An "enzyme-based product would break up the stain source and make it dissipate," says Norris.

You can also use baking soda on the urine spot to neutralize the odor; just sprinkle it on and vacuum once it's dry.

The other weapon you should have in your arsenal? Vinegar.

"The vinegar sends a signal to your cat. They don't like the smell," says **Jennifer Gregory**, brand marketing manager for Molly Maid in Ann Arbor, MI.

By applying vinegar to the spot, you've "turned it into something they don't have any interest in," she says.

Keep in mind that if you don't get rid of the odor of the urine, your cat will continue to pee in the same spot.

Replacing the carpet

If the carpet has been ruined from cat waste, you may have to [replace it entirely](#). When you pull up the carpet, you'll likely notice stains on the subfloor underneath the carpet padding. Norris recommends painting over the cat pee stains with a primer like KILZ that helps seal in odors. If the stain is not painted over, the smell might come back even when you lay down new carpet. Ask a professional company about treating these stains to ensure this doesn't happen.

"They should be educated on it," says Norris. "But as a consumer, I would ask and get things in writing."

Check the walls

As difficult as it may seem, some cats pee on the wall. If you're having trouble pinpointing the stench of urine in your home, inspect your walls—especially the ones by the litter box.

If you catch your cat in the act, blot up the urine as soon as possible. Norris advises using a mixture of water and vinegar to eliminate the smell. If that doesn't work, you can try repainting the walls. Again, use a primer that will seal in or eliminate the odor before applying paint to the walls.