

Catteries and Catos

What are catteries and catios?

They are outdoor enclosures for cats. Cats love to spend time in the fresh air and watch birds, bugs, and other animals. A cattery/catio provides a way for a cat to enjoy the outdoors without danger of being attacked by another animal, struck by a car, lost or stolen. They can be made with a variety of materials and constructed in a range of shapes and sizes. They can be free-standing or attached to a house or garage, inexpensive or higher end, plain or fancy, bought or built.



What do I need to know about catteries/catios?

There are a few things to consider when building or buying a cattery or catio:

- Although you can build a cattery that is low to the ground, cleaning and spending time in the cattery yourself will be much easier if the cattery is built to human height. Plus, most cats love being up high, so you can provide structures for your cat to climb and perch on.
- If your cat enters the cattery through a window, the cattery will need to have a door to the outside so you can access it for cleaning, maintenance, and possible emergency care of your pet.
- The cattery will need a top – not necessarily a roof, but something to keep the cats in and everything else out. Chain link, hardware cloth, or even strong shade cloth, securely attached to the sides, should suffice.
- The cattery will need a firm base (hardware cloth at least) on the floor, to keep the right animals in and the wrong animals out.
- Provide a litter box. This isn't always necessary if the cat has access to a box in the house, but even so, many cats prefer to use the great outdoors. Even if your cat doesn't consistently use the litter box, make sure one is available for him. The box will need to be sheltered, either with a hood or with some boards or shelves, so it doesn't get wet in inclement weather.
- Provide enough food and water. Again, you'll need to shelter the food and water area. If you have ant or bug problems, look into bug-proof food dishes. If your cat spends a lot of time in her cattery, keep in mind that an outdoor cat needs more food to keep warm during chilly weather.

- Allow for extremes in the weather. Make sure the cattery has a shady area so your kitty doesn't get too hot in the summer. If your winters are cold, provide access to a heated room or garage; don't leave your cat out in a stand-alone structure in very cold weather.
- You can enrich the cattery environment by providing logs or posts for scratching. Hang bird feeders nearby (but not in the cattery!), or plant a tray of grass for your kitty to frolic in. Be creative! You can make the cattery a nice place for your cat to hang out, and a pleasant place for you to visit.

Where can I get more information about catteries/catios?

You can search the Internet for "cat enclosures" or "catios" to find out what other people have done. Catio Showcase (catioshowcase.com) and www.catiodesigns.com have lots of photos and helpful information about different kinds of cat enclosures. Building plans are available from Just4Cats: www.just4cats.com. If you want to build from a kit, you can order a kit for a cattery from C&D Pet Products: www.cdpets.com.

Are there any alternatives to catteries?

If you have a fenced yard, you might also consider "cat fencing" – netting that attaches to standard fences to prevent escapes and intrusions. Check out this website: www.cattencein.com. Another type of cat fencing is Purr...fect Fence; for more information, go to www.purrfectfence.com.