

'Kick Litter' Thinks Outside the Box

CatChannel Managing Editor Nikki Batalis blogs about an intriguing notion – toilet-training your cat.

By Nikki Batalis

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Potty-train a child? Been there, done that.

But toilet-train a cat? That's the intriguing notion of Perre DiCarlo's new book, "Kick Litter" (CDA Press, 48 pages, \$15.95).

DiCarlo, tongue firmly in cheek, describes his successful effort to train his two adorable cats, Moxie and Cooper, to "kick" their litter habit and learn to use the toilet. (The subtitle, by the way, is "Nine-Step Program for Recovering Litter Addicts.")

Each cat confesses to being a "litter addict." "Litter gave my life meaning; I only did it to unwind," Moxie tells us.

DiCarlo — who happens to be the genius web designer behind the Warner Bros., "Harry Potter" and "Batman" sites when he's not training his two kitties — lays out a step-by-step plan for the big move from litterbox to toilet.

It's a task that appears to be neither quick nor easy. The process involves first getting the cats trained to use the litterbox on top of the toilet, then eventually placing an aluminum roasting pan inside the toilet for them to use. Cut a hole in the pan; then progressively make the hole larger and larger until, voila! One day the pan disappears and the cats — who are well-rewarded during the training process — are actually doing their business in the toilet.

Now, this may be all well and good for DiCarlo, and Moxie and Cooper look like they have adjusted well to the new routine — and have shown some incredible balancing skill in the process. It's not easy to position oneself on the potty in the manner shown, though, as Moxie says, "Girls learn faster, of course." (Moxie's blog Miss Litter features some pretty cute photos.)

But I don't know. "Kicking litter" may not be for everyone.

I think about my household, which has five people. Even if we ever managed to find the time to go through all these steps, would we really want a cat using the toilet? What if he was slow to do his business? I can just see my kids — or me — pounding on the door on a typical rushed weekday morning: "Hey, are you done in there yet? There are some of us that still need to use the bathroom, you know! I've got to get to work; you've got all day to sit on the pot!"

So enjoy "Kick Litter"; it's a funny, beautifully designed and photographed book, a perfect gift for a cat lover.

But for some of us, training a cat to use the toilet might just have to take a back seat for a while.