

Cat Sleeps in Dresser Drawers

CatChannel behavior expert Marilyn Krieger, CCBC, explains how to keep a cat from sleeping in undesirable spots.

By Marilyn Krieger

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Q: Our cat has recently learned to open all of the drawers in the dresser in our bedroom. She does this in the middle of the night and while we are at work. She jumps in and crawls to the back and opens the drawers underneath before settling in for a nap. While doing this, she sheds hair all over the place, claws my nicely ironed clothes and makes holes in clothing while trying to get a hold to open the drawer. It is OK when she does it when we are there, as we can stop her, but our nights are filled with shallow sleep while listening for the telltale sound of her opening the drawers, then getting up to stop her. When she does this while we are at work, by the time we get home we can find up to four or five drawers full of hairy clothes strewn all over the floor. She has another cat to play with, so doesn't appear bored. She also has a cat bed that she adores. We can't figure out why she does this and how to stop it. Any help you could give me would be great.

A: Many cats love to sleep in the security of drawers and cupboards. Your little girl has her reasons for bedding down in a drawer, rather than sleeping in the open. There might be other animals or noises in the household that cause your kitty to feel ill at ease, or she might just prefer the softness of the clothes and the warmth and closeness of the drawers.

Before gently influencing her to not open drawers and sleep in them, provide her with a choice of alternative locations that are comfortable and more appealing than the drawers. The location is important. Her new sleeping quarters should be in your bedroom since she likes being near you and your partner. It is common for cats to prefer sleeping up high, so give her sleeping alternatives that are elevated. Small, deep, but sturdy boxes located on top of the chest of drawers might become desired sleeping locations. A cat tree, located near the bed, which has a carpeted enclosed box might be appealing to her as well. The new locations need to be comfortable and contain your smells. Sleep in some old T-shirts and then put them in the boxes for her. The boxes should be comfortable and in a location that feels safe and secure to her.

Another alternative is to provide her with two of her very own drawers. The clothes that you don't want her to have access to can be removed, and clothes and towels that she can sleep on can be left in. The other drawers can be made inaccessible to her.

After providing sleep-centric choices for her, make the drawers unavailable to her by baby-proofing them. Use adhesive mounted cabinet and drawer safety latches to keep her from opening the drawers.