

"Keeping your cat indoors doesn't have to mean dooming him to a bored and unhappy life—and in fact, it shouldn't mean that at all. No matter how big or small, your home can become your cat's paradise—and all you have to do to start is read *Your Home, Their Territory*, written with love and expertise by my friend Dr. Tony Buffington and his team at The Ohio State University."

—Dr. Marty Becker, "America's Veterinarian" and regular veterinarian on "Good Morning America" and "The Dr. Oz Show"

"Increasingly, cats are staying indoors. Generally, that is a good thing—as long as the environment is appropriately enriched. Here you'll find 10 simple steps for achieving feline nirvana inside and (safely, with supervision) outside your home, to spark interest and keep your cat's brain and body working—in short, to maintain the essence of what being a cat is all about. Follow these tips, and you'll likelier have healthier and happier cats."

—Steve Dale, cat behavior consultant, syndicated newspaper columnist, and national radio host of *Steve Dale's Pet World* and *The Pet Minute*

"With gorgeous illustrations and expert, straightforward advice, Dr. Tony Buffington and his team at Ohio State have produced a must-read winner for every cat lover in *Your Home, Their Territory: Creating the right habitat for your indoor cats*. Make your cat happy and read it!"

—Gina Spadafori, author of *Cats For Dummies*

"Dr. Buffington has created the *purrfect* combination of his scientific knowledge and investigations, his winsome wit, and his passion for cats to provide a fun, informative, and important collection of tips for keeping your cat—and you—happy in the home you share."

Jane Brunt, DVM
CATalyst Council, Inc.

"One must
love a cat on
its own terms."

— Paul Gray

Your Home Their Territory

Creating the
right habitat for
your indoor cats

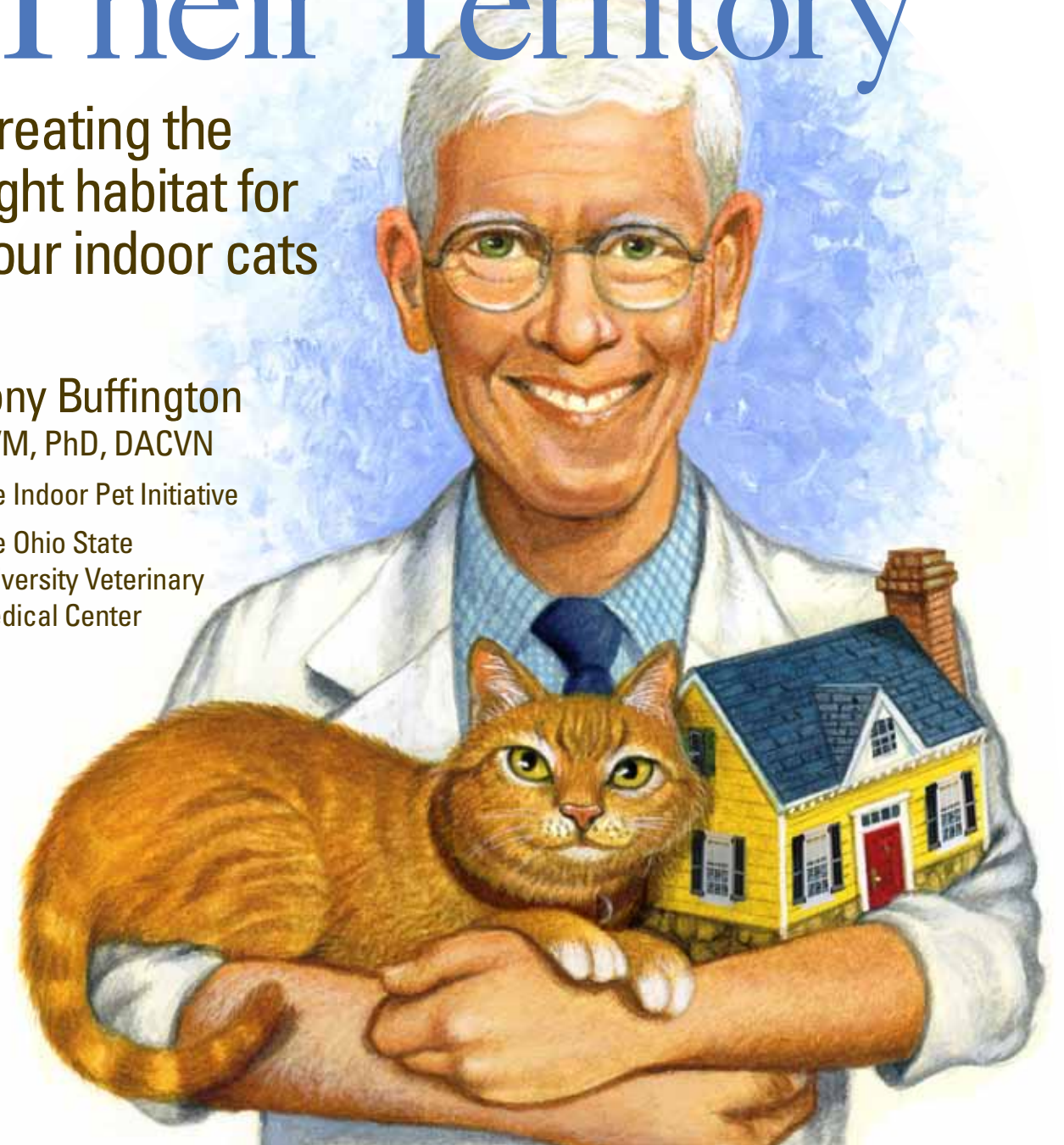
Tony Buffington
DVM, PhD, DACVN

The Indoor Pet Initiative

The Ohio State
University Veterinary
Medical Center

Your Home, Their Territory: Creating the right habitat for your indoor cats

Tony Buffington, DVM, PhD, DACVN



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Text: Jeanne Tranter
Illustrations: David Groff
Photography: Jo McCulty; Linda Marin
Design: Linda Lutz
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For Further Exploration

The information in this booklet is based upon research through The Indoor Pet Initiative, a program at The Ohio State University Veterinary Medical Center that strives to enhance the health and welfare of companion animals the world over.

The Indoor Pet Initiative provides additional insight into amazing ways environmental enrichment can help our indoor cats. To further explore findings and recommendations of The Indoor Pet Initiative, please visit indoorpet.osu.edu.

Your Home.
Their Territory.



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About The Indoor Pet Initiative

This booklet springs from The Indoor Pet Initiative, a program at The Ohio State University Veterinary Medical Center that strives to enhance the health and welfare of companion animals the world over.

The Indoor Pet Initiative—an expansion of the original program, The Indoor Cat Initiative—guides caregivers in creating environments that respect the true nature of their pet cats and dogs. Our domestic cats are carnivores by nature, solitary hunters of small prey. Because of the size of the birds, bugs, and small rodents cats eat, they must hunt 10 to 20 times each day, whenever prey is present. In addition to being predators, cats also are prey, hunted in the wild by larger carnivores and primates. They are the most independent and the most three-dimensional (climbing helps them both hunt and hide) mammals in our lives. We need to provide our cats opportunities to climb, explore, and play (hunt), rest (to await the next hunt), eat and eliminate in solitude (when they are vulnerable prey), and interact with others on their terms. A suitable environment will enable them to express their true nature, nourish their well-being, and deepen our joy of pet ownership.

The initiative, and this booklet, seek to help forge a strong, lasting human-animal bond that greatly enriches life for pets and their people.



The Plight of the Pampered Cat

Our indoor cats need more than all the comforts of home.

With a quick flick of the tail and a final scan of the backyard, the cat has come indoors.

For good.

And, sometimes, for ill.

Until as recently as the 1970s, cats typically lived outside, on farms and in suburban neighborhoods. They traveled the stretch of their territories, pounced on prey at every opportunity, and bred as nature decreed. They relied upon keen instincts—gifts from their wild ancestors—to battle the perils of their outdoor world.

Against this backdrop, the popularity of cats as beloved indoor pets began to grow. Enter the house cat. They came in from the cold—to nap in warm sunbeams, take a leisurely stretch, saunter to the bowl for a bite, and hop into our beds at night.

Small wonder we think our indoor cats have plopped into the lap of luxury.

As it turns out, though, few cats are suited to such easy living. Like their ancestors, they are driven to hunt, explore, defend their territories, and mate. And the indoor environment typically discourages these drives. After centuries of self-reliance, indoor living forces cats to depend on us completely for food, shelter, challenge, and variety. Our cats—so adept at manipulating their own territories in the wild—retain little control over their indoor environment.

As a result, some of our cats do not feel at home in our houses. Although our homes provide safety from outdoor dangers, they sometimes inadvertently cage our cats within an unnatural habitat, inhospitable to their basic needs. Our cats' deepest drives are either repressed, or expressed in ways we find unacceptable. As a result, our cats—who so easily maintain their balance atop the slimmest fences—can fall victim to stress and, ultimately, to illness.





Unsettling Settings and Stress

The environment can make our cats sick.

One cat is disturbingly thin. Another wrestles with a hairball. And a third misses the litter pan. These could be signs of serious disease—or reactions to environments that thwart the cats' natural behaviors and, literally, make them sick.

Signs of urinary tract, gastrointestinal, lung, or skin disorders, obesity, diabetes, and behavioral problems also can result from settings that ignore the cat's true nature. Litter box problems afflict more than one of every 10 of our cats, with particularly distressing consequences. Litter pan disuse is the primary reason people relinquish their cats to shelters, where they risk euthanasia. Although urinary or intestinal diseases can cause cats to avoid the pan, so can stress related to the environment.

Cats living in barren indoor environments also tend toward tubby—feeding what has become an epidemic in feline obesity. Today, more than half of our cats are

overweight or obese and at increased risk of diabetes, skin disorders, arthritis, and other maladies.

The right indoor environment—one that allows cats to express their true nature—can help trim down the frighteningly high incidence of such disorders. Along the way, it can significantly improve the quality of our cats' lives, deepen the bond we share with them, and reduce the number of misunderstood cats who are surrendered to shelters.

We took a giant leap toward improving life for cats when we brought them into our homes. Ten more, relatively small, steps can help them feel truly at home there. Easy changes, such as setting up a scratching post, scattering a few toys about, and relocating a litter pan, are some of the simple steps we can take to create the ideal indoor world for America's most popular pet—the remarkable cat.

Helping Your Cats Feel at Home

Ten Simple Steps to
Creating the Ideal
Indoor World





Tony Buffington, DVM, PhD, DACVN

Dr. Tony Buffington serves as professor of Veterinary Clinical Sciences at The Ohio State University Veterinary Medical Center. Following service in the United States Coast Guard, he attended the University of California at Davis, where he received his doctorate in veterinary medicine and a bachelor of science, master of science, and doctorate in nutrition. He is board-certified in veterinary nutrition.

Dr. Buffington lectures on clinical nutrition, research methods, and communications skills, and conducts nutrition rounds in the fourth-year community practice rotation. His research focuses on idiopathic cystitis in cats as a naturally occurring disease analog of interstitial cystitis in human beings and has been funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) since 1994. It has led to investigation of the roles of development, early life events, and

the environment in the pathogenesis of these medically unexplained syndromes. Dr. Buffington's other clinical interests include obesity, evidence-based medicine, and effective medical communications. He is a member of the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA), four invited professional societies, and past member of the NIH study section in urology.



Dr. Buffington has authored more than 100 scientific publications, 30 book chapters, and, with Dr. Sarah Abood and Cheryl Holloway, the book *Manual of Veterinary Dietetics*. He has received the Mark L. Morris Lifetime Achievement Award in Veterinary Clinical Sciences, the Pfizer Award for Research Excellence, the World Small Animal Veterinary Association Hill's Award for Excellence in Veterinary Healthcare, and the Bourgelat Award of the British Small Animal Veterinary Association.