



**Fed up with playing doorman to your cat, without a tip? A cat flap could be the solution, allowing your cat free or restricted access to the outside world.**

### Where can I put a cat flap?

A cat flap can be fitted to just about any door, wall or window. Wooden doors, walls and glass each need different types of cat flap, so make sure you choose the right one. Cat flaps are normally used to allow your cat access to the house but an alternative is to fit one to a shed or outbuilding, so that your cat can shelter somewhere dry.

- **Glass doors or windows**

Fitting cat flaps to glass doors or windows can be tricky and you should get a qualified glazier to do the job. If you have single glazed glass doors the glazier should be able to cut a circular hole for a cat flap. However all doors in modern buildings have to be fitted with safety glass. It is possible to fit cat flaps in double-glazed doors and safety glass but the holes need to be cut when the glass is being made. Replacing all the glass in your door may be expensive, so see if it is possible to replace just the lower door panel with a piece of glass with a hole for the cat flap. Alternatively, since windows do not have to have safety glass, think about fitting a flap in a kitchen window, if your cat can easily obtain access to it.

- **Wooden or metal doors**

If the cat flap is going to be positioned in a door, measure the thickness of the door and choose a suitable cat flap. A tunnel or inner liner will make neater finish in a wider door and usually tunnel extensions are available. Plastic cat flaps can be used in metal doors, but aluminium types are available and usually preferable. A cat flap should not be fitted to a fire door as the fire retardant properties will be seriously altered. Measure the height from the floor to the belly of your cat, usually 100-150mm (4-6 inches), and this is the height you should fit the cat flap.

- **Brick walls**

Consult a builder if you want to fit a cat flap in a wall, and choose a cat flap suitable for the thickness of the wall. The cat flap may need a tunnel, or another method, to connect the front and back parts.

### What about security?

For security purposes, a cat flap should be fitted on the side of a door away from the handle, so that a burglar cannot put their hand through and reach the lock or key. A self-locking cat flap which can only be operated by your cat can help keep would-be feline, or human intruders out.

### Will my cat use her new door?

Young cats usually learn to use their cat flaps very quickly. Older cats may find them confusing at first and need some training to use them. When you first fit the cat flap, prop the flap permanently open and entice your cat to go through. Placing a bowl of her favourite food on the other side may do the trick! Once your cat is happy to go through the open hole, prop the flap slightly less open. Gradually lower the flap a bit at a time until eventually your cat is starting to push the flap just a little to get at her treat. Use plenty of praise as she begins to work the device on her own. If your cat is litter trained moving her litter tray outside the cat flap may make her go through once she is desperate. Sometimes a catnip spray may help to attract your cat to the other side of the cat flap.

### How do I keep unwanted visitors away?

If other cats come into your house through the cat flap your own cat may start to feel insecure in her own home. If your cat starts spraying urine inside the house after you have fitted a cat flap, this might be the cause. There are several types of cat flap that can only be opened by an electronic or magnetic key which your cat wears on her collar. The flap automatically unlocks when it recognises your cat approaching (even if this happens at speed). This will keep out all cats not wearing the magnetic key collars, but you could be unlucky and find that the invading cat has a similar collar of their own. To keep out all other cats get a flap worked by a programmable key collar that uses an electronic 'password'.

### Can I stop my cat coming in and out?

If you want to have control over your cat's movements in and out of your home choose a locking cat flap



which restricts access. The four-way locking system uses 'out only', 'in only', 'open' and 'locked' settings. If you like your cat to come in at night, but don't want to wait up, then the 'in only' setting will allow you to get to bed on time. There are also simple locking cat flaps which allow you to determine what side of the flap your cats stays.

### **Can my cat be injured by a flap?**

The flap is so light that it is unlikely to hurt a cat's tail, back or paws even when they fly through at great speed! For exceptionally acrobatic cats think about getting a flexible, rather than solid flap.

**If you want any other information on health issues concerning your cat please contact Unicorn Vets on 023 8034 3434 and we will be happy to advise you.**