

FACTSHEET

Balcony safety

Cats and balconies are a risky mix. Cats are born adventurers and might see a second or even third floor balcony as a gate to the outside world. Although cats are good at balancing on railings, they could get a fright and lose balance, or see a passing bird or insect and instinctively pounce.

Vets tell too many sad stories of cats who have lived successfully with unrestricted balcony access for years, only to suffer a tragic accident later in their lives. It only takes one slip. The old adage that 'cats always land on their feet' is simply not true. Falls often result in broken limbs, jaws or pelvic bones, as well as causing internal injury, which is not always immediately apparent. Some falls can be fatal.

Fortunately, balconies can be adapted easily and inexpensively to become spaces where cats can safely enjoy outdoor time. Enclosed balcony access enables cats to experience the outside world safely. Exposure to fresh air and sunshine, breezes and scents, neighbourhood sights and noises are all psychologically beneficial for feline health.

Balcony cat-nets are a simple and highly effective choice when installed from floor to rooftop. A range of netting products is available through secureakat.com.au and catnets.com.au, with both commercial installation and DIY options. Specially designed cat safety nets are UV and chew resistant. Transparent versions are available to comply with building regulations and keep balconies looking tidy without obstructing views.

Commercial cat enclosures are also available through catmax.com.au and catnip.com.au. Options range from enclosed tunnels to multilevel cat complexes.

Once your balcony is safely enclosed, add some items of feline interest to make the balcony a special place for your cat. Maximise the use of vertical space by installing perches. Perches are a great addition, as they allow for elevated views over the neighbourhood and are fun places for climbing, playing and even napping. There are many varieties of cat perches available. Choose a strongly built product to suit the indoor/outdoor balcony environment or build your own. A special cat bed might be placed on a perch or in a sunny, sheltered corner of the balcony. Particular toys might be strategically placed to flutter in the breeze.

Add potted plants such as cat grass, catnip or cat mint. These can be grown inexpensively from seed, then transplanted into larger pots. Or start with young already established plants from your local nursery. These feline-friendly greenery make a lovely contribution to the beauty of your balcony and will give your cat something delicious to nibble. Just keep in mind that some plants can be toxic to cats, so ensure you check any plants placed on the balcony are cat safe. For more information, see our factsheet [Cat-friendly flowers](#).

Enjoy turning your balcony into a safe, enriched environment for your cat and a visually beautiful space where you can happily relax together.