

Creating a Pet-Friendly Home: Tips for Bangalorean Pet Owners

Vaibhavi Kodnani (Article written for Pampaw, a pet venture in the idea stage)



Bengaluru claims the honour of being among the most pet-friendly cities in India, thanks to the abundant green spaces, pet-welcoming cafes, adoption programs, veterinary services, and, most importantly, the availability of pet-friendly rental properties. Despite these advantages, we cannot overlook the growing challenges of keeping pets within the city's 'shrinking' homes. Based on recent reports, nearly 75% of the residential spaces in Bengaluru consist of apartments, leaving only 25% as independent houses.

Since pets love open spaces, should flat-owners abandon their dream of bringing home a pet? Absolutely not! If you are ready to invest time in pet-proofing your homes, you can still have furry companions and give them a comfortable and happy life! Here's a step-by-step guide to making your compact apartment pet-friendly:

Step 1: Bye-bye clutter, hello minimalism

Dogs and cats love being active and need plenty of space to move around. Cluttering your space with excessive furniture, home decor, books, laundry, open shoe racks, and wires can lead to bouts of stress and anxiety in your pets. Out of frustration, they may end up damaging your belongings. Don't be surprised if chewed-up footwear, scratched furniture, and damaged walls become an everyday thing.

If you wish to avoid this from happening, adopt a minimalist lifestyle. Declutter your house by keeping only the most essential things outside and storing the rest in cupboards, drawers, and other spaces out of reach of your pets. Avoid keeping breakable items such as vases, showpieces, and table photo frames on display. As for wires, it's best to conceal them because pets love chewing on them! Last but not least, since our furry friends tend to shed hair, get rid of carpets, rugs, and doormats where hair can quickly accumulate.

Step 2: Safety first, excuses later

We all know our pets are curious little munchkins who love exploring anything and everything around them. So, it's our duty to ensure they do not get their paws on anything that could be dangerous for them. Electric points? Conceal them. Medicines? Please keep them in drawers. Indoor plants and flowers? Make sure you choose the non-toxic ones; if you can, avoid them altogether. Household cleaners, insecticides, pesticides, mothballs, and rat traps? Store them on the higher shelves. Scented candles, incense sticks, and diffusers? Avoid burning them in the same room as your pets. Waste bins? Get ones with a firm foot pedal system so that pets cannot open them.

If you live in a high-rise building, install netted windows to prevent your pets from accidentally falling from the gaps between the grills. For apartments with balconies and independent houses, ensure the fencing is high enough for pets not to jump over.

Step 3: Accommodating upholstery and bedding

Our fur babies can get messy. We all have stories of stubborn pet hair stuck to sheets, ripped sofas, and stained beds. Does that mean you should not allow them on your furniture? No, it simply means you need to change your fabric choices.

So, high-maintenance materials like velvet, silk, suede, and linen are not ideal for your home if you have a furry friend sharing space with you. Similarly, tweed, knits, corduroy, and other open-weave fabrics are a big no-no. Instead, tightly woven textiles like canvas, denim, or microfiber are good upholstery choices. You can even go ahead with leather as it is much more durable, easier to clean, and does not absorb pet odour. Coming to bedsheets and slip-on pillow covers, rather than plain fabrics, go with patterned and textured ones that can easily hide stains and scratches.

Step 4: Flooring and furniture that help, not hurt

Certain types of flooring materials, such as polished marble, porcelain, or ceramic tiles, can cause your pets to slip while running or playing, which is terrible for their joints in the long run. Make sure you have textured vinyl or concrete tiles installed that are non-slippery and offer a good grip.

You can also make small changes to make your furniture safe for your pets. If you have tables with sharp corners, add edge protectors to protect your fur baby from injuries. Consider removing dangerous furnishings such as glass tables, rocking chairs, unstable shelves, and open storage spaces. It is a good idea to invest in multi-functional furniture pieces that can be used by both you and your pet. For instance, coffee tables with built-in

pet beds or a storage cabinet with a hidden cat litter box. You can also think of installing pet doors to ensure easy and unrestricted movement throughout the house.

Step 5: Cosy nooks and corners

Just like we have favourite spots in our house, such as the window seating area or a particular chair in the living room, so do our pets! As much as they love spending time with you, they need to recluse in their comfy corners for their 'me time' to be happy. You can identify the areas in the house that make them go, 'It's my spot!' and amp them up with pet mats, beds, and toys.

Step 6: No laziness for cleanliness

Despite your efforts to ensure the house stays mess-free, you cannot escape the everyday spruce-ups and occasional deep clean drives! There are many ways to keep your apartment sparkling clean with pets.

Have a lint roller handy to collect the fur from all the spaces your little bud likes to chill. Keep throws on furniture and beds to protect the costly furnishings from fur, stains, dirt, and pet smells. Invest in easy-to-wash dog beds and clean them once every 1-2 weeks. Dedicate a basket for storing your fur baby's toys. Buy pet stain removers so that you can immediately clean up when your pooch or kitty accidentally pees, poops, or vomits in any space. Lastly, get a cordless vacuum cleaner to deep clean your house every few months to get rid of every bit of fur and dander!

So, are you ready to make your Bengaluru home pet-friendly?

You see, making your pets feel at home is not that hard after all! In six easy steps, you can completely transform your living space and make it more welcoming for your cats and dogs. So, bring the bob-the-builder in you alive and get to work.