

Twisty Cat FAQ Sheet

What is wrong with this kitty's legs?

People call them twisty cats; their condition is caused by a rare mutation related to polydactylism. Technically, the condition is called Radial Hypoplasia (RH) when the front legs are twisted and Femoral Hypoplasia (FH) when the rear legs are twisted.

What causes this?

This is congenital or hereditary trait the cat was born with. RH or FH causes the bones of the leg to be shortened to varying degrees along with twisting due to abnormal growth. It disrupts the development of the toes causing duplication of digits.

Does it hurt?

The condition itself is non-painful but you can get veterinary opinions about your cat and his/her chances of living a pain-free life.

Can they walk and run and climb?

Yes! These cats adapt! These cats usually learn to walk on their elbows, crouched, with a rocking and crablike gait. But they get around just fine in all but the most severe of cases.

What special care is required?

RH/FH cats can't be outdoor cats. They can only go out in the company of a human and with close supervision.

Watch their legs carefully for any signs of sores and abrasions. If this occurs, protective covering can be fashioned. Although skin toughens up as a kitten becomes an adult, it's best to keep up inspections.

Lift the kitties down when they get into high places, whenever you see them. Making a carpeted ramp can help for high spots the cat might insist on reaching frequently. Or, make a cushioned floor area near those enticing summits.

Tend the litter box often because RH/FH cats may not be as agile about avoiding whatever is already in the box. A larger than usual litter box is helpful for RH cats; it also helps if the box has low sides.

Rugs and carpets will help provide traction for walking.