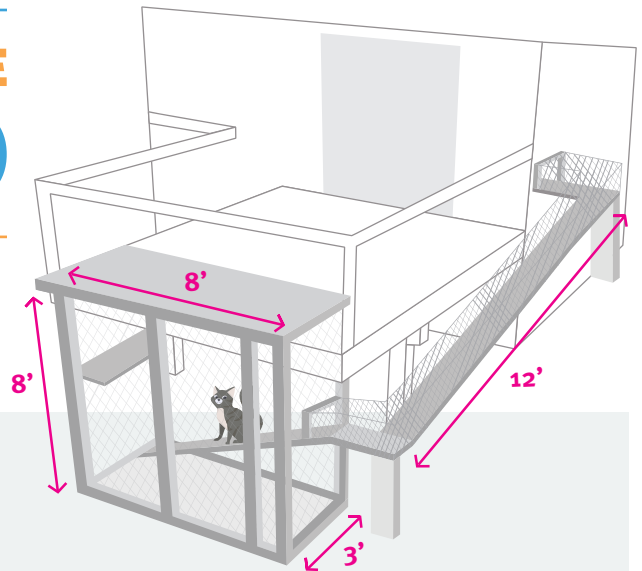# DIY STAND ALONE CATIO

Follow the steps below to create your own "Stand Alone Catio" that comes with a tunnel access option. This design uses a window or cat door as a tunnel entrance to create an outdoor space for your cats to enjoy!

SHOPPING LIST

- ☐ 15 **2X4** CEDAR BOARDS
- ☐ **5/8** PLYWOOD SHEETS *for the roof of your enclosure*
- ☐ **3 ½** INCH DECK SCREWS
- ☐ **1X1** WIRE MESH *stainless steel or galvanized to avoid weather damage*
- ☐ **¾** INCH OR LONGER STAPLES
- ☐ DRILL BITS *slightly more narrow than screw width*
- ☐ WIRE/TIN SNIPS *to cut mesh to correct size*
- ☐ CIRCULAR SAW *and/or* TABLE SAW
- ☐ ELECTRIC DRILL
- ☐ STAPLE GUN

When choosing wood: make it **cedar**! Cedar wood is extremely durable, and holds up well to outdoor weather conditions. Also, the wood's natural oils help to deter insect damage and rotting.
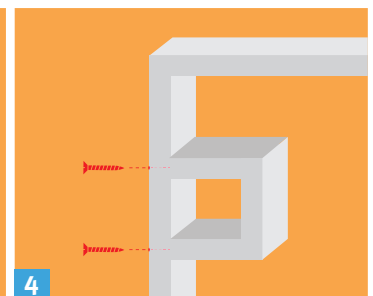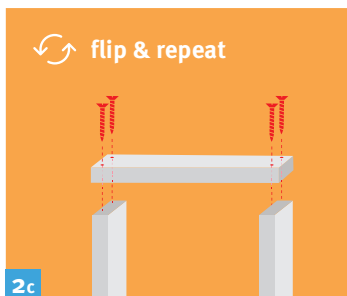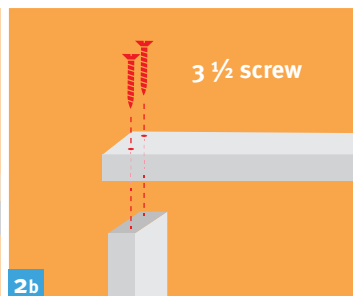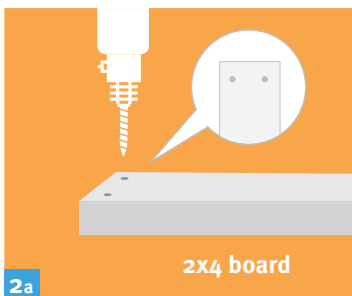
A note on **plywood**: Untreated plywood, if exposed to the elements, could break down or mold. Make sure to use a pet safe wood preservative, like paint or oil. Look for products that are water based, free from heavy metals, Low VOC, and avoid creosote. Treated plywood should not be used near ponds and streams because it is toxic to aquatic life.

All measurements provided below are included as an example! Plans can be modified for your existing space. Additionally, houses are not always straight, square, or level. Adjust the catio dimensions to fit the "personality" of your house.

STEPS TO ASSEMBLE:

1. First, decide where you want your catio and measure and record the dimensions. Remember to measure twice and cut once.

2. Create the front and back wall of your catio by cutting the **2x4** boards to the correct dimensions. Drill 2 pilot holes *(a guide hole for your screw to go into)* near the end of each **2x4**, evenly spaced. These should be slightly smaller than the screw thickness you are using. Drill the pilot holes at least 1 inch from the edge of the board to prevent the wood from splitting. Use 2 **3 ½** inch screws to connect the 2 pieces of lumber.

3. Build the two side walls of your catio following the same procedures as step 2.

4. Don't forget to leave space for a tunnel attachment point in one of the walls. To make this "catio entrance", cut **2x4** to size. Drill 2 pilot holes and attach the **2x4** pieces together using **3 ½** inch screws. Then attach the "catio entrance" to one of your catio walls using **3 ½** inch screws. The height of the entrance will depend on your tunnel height.

2a 2x4 board

2b 3 ½ screw

2c flip & repeat

4

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STEPS TO ASSEMBLE (CONT-ED):

5. Attach the **1x1** mesh to the outside of each wall. Use staples to lock the mesh into place. Cut any extra mesh off using the wire snips to avoid injuries to yourself or your cat!

6. Assemble the frame of the catio. Join the four walls together tightly by first aligning the edges flush and drilling two pilot holes, evenly spaced on the end of the **2x4**. Then use 2 **3 ½** inch screws to lock them in place.
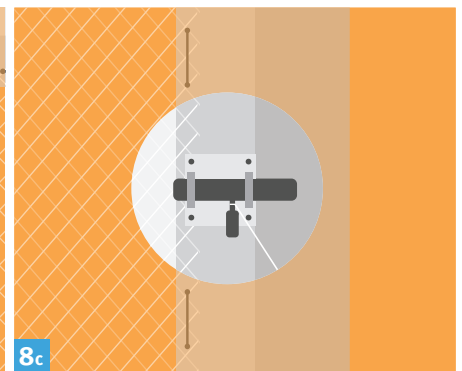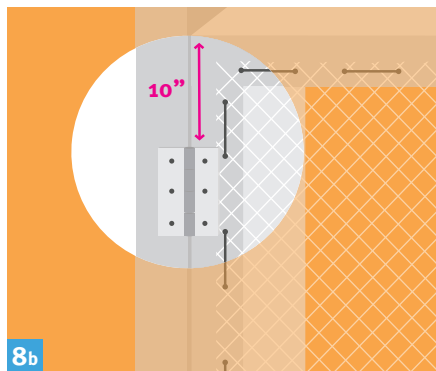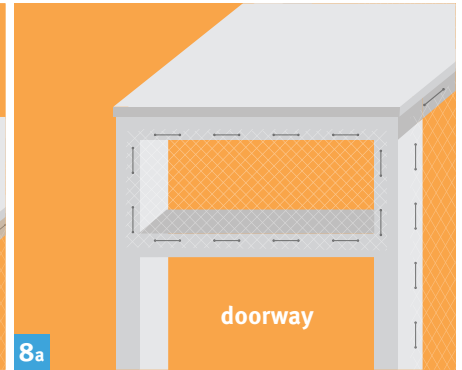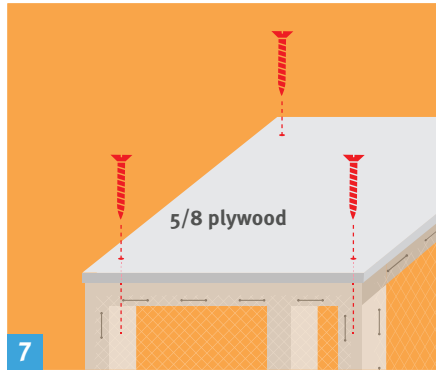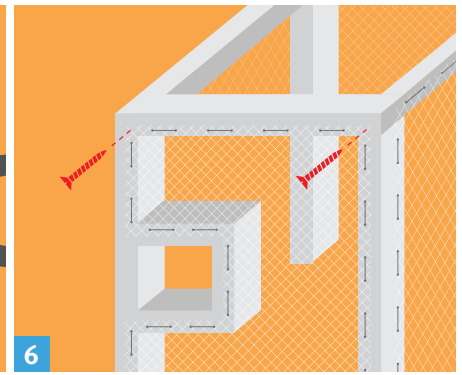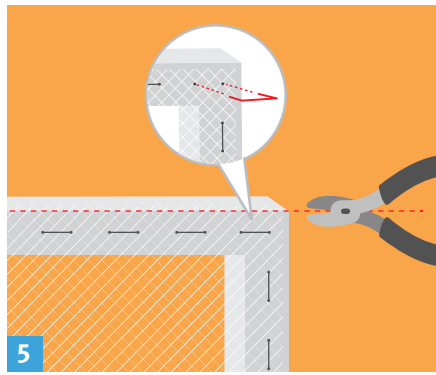
7. Attach a **5/8** sheet of plywood to the top of your frame using **3 ½** inch screws. Screws should be placed at least 1 inch from the edge of the plywood board to prevent the board from splitting. This is the roof of your enclosure. For extra waterproofing, add shingles *(or other roof panels)* to your roof, attaching them with staples.

8. Fit your door into place and using **3 ½** inch screws attach the hinges approximately 10 inches from each end *(top and bottom)* of the door. On the side opposite your hinges, screw your latch into place. Make sure there is a safety cord on the latch. You don't have an escape route through the tunnel like your furry friend!

A note for the floor: This stand alone catio can have a "natural floor" (grass, dirt) or consider a different substrate such as flagstone, mulch, gravel or loose stone.

A note for the door:
Making a door can be tricky. It can be useful to use a carpenter square and a level to ensure that all corners are perfectly square on both the frame and the door itself. Sometimes wood is warped, which can make this step difficult. When purchasing wood, consider looking down the board on all sides to see if it seems crooked, twisted or bowed.

5

6

7 — 5/8 plywood

8a — doorway

8b — 10"

8c

ADDING A TUNNEL

Depending on the design of your space, it may not be possible for the catio to fit directly against the house where there is a window opening. In that event, add a tunnel to connect a stand alone catio to your house using the steps below.

If you do not have a window opening but still want to create an outdoor catio paradise for your cat, consider the addition of a cat door. Please hire a qualified contractor to inspect the proposed location(s) of the pet door and to complete installation. Already have a cat door? Perfect! Use this as your tunnel entrance.
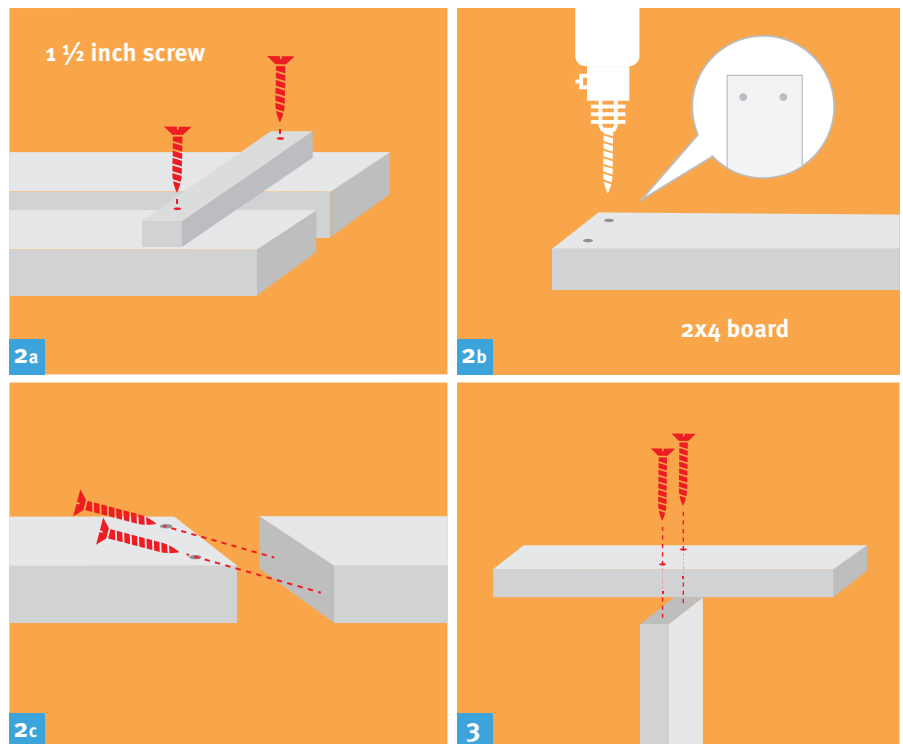
STEPS TO ASSEMBLE:

1. To start building your tunnel, measure out the distance needed from the window that will be used as a kitty entrance to your catio.

2. Using cedar deck boards cut to size, create a walkway from the house entrance to your catio. Use **1x2** inch pieces of cedar, cut to 11 inches, to create a wider platform and add better footholds for the cat. To attach these pieces of wood to the deck boards, secure using 2, **1 ½** inch screws evenly spaced on each board.

If your tunnel needs to be longer that a standard deck board, or for attaching the ramps, attach boards end to end using pocket holes. To do this, drill 2 pilot holes evenly spaced on the end of one of your boards.

Next, insert your screw into the pilot hole, slowly lowering the drill towards the board at an angle as you do. The drill should almost touch the wood. Drill the screw at an angle into the pocket hole and into the next board, securing the two deck boards together. If it seems wobbly, add more screws as needed, going from the opposite direction.

3. Use **2x4** as vertical supports to make sure your tunnel does not bend! Drill two pilot holes into your tunnel and attach these using **3 ½** inch screws.

1 ½ inch screw

2a

2x4 board

2b

2c

3

STEPS TO ASSEMBLE (CONT-ED):

4. Use your **1x1** mesh to create an escape proof tunnel for your cats to safely arrive at their catio. Attach the mesh to the plywood platform with staples.

5. Make your support brackets using **2x4** boards cut to size. Two boards have even cuts, while the third has 45-degree angle cut on each end. Drill 2 pilot holes, evenly spaced on the end of the **2x4**. Use **3 ½** inch screws to create your "triangle brackets".

6. Attach one end of your tunnel to the window or cat door using one of the support brackets and **3 ½** inch screws. Make sure to attach your tunnel to a stud *(vertical support in your wall)* on the exterior wall of the house.

7. Attach the other end of your tunnel to the catio using your 2nd support bracket. Attach this to your "catio entrance" using **3 ½** inch screws. Make sure that there are no gaps in the mesh for your cat to escape and to prevent your cat from getting hurt!