

Cat Falls 26 Stories, Lives to Purr Again

'Lucky' Plunges From New York Apartment Ledge, Escapes With Minor Injury

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Do cats always land on their feet?

The unbelievable tale of a cat named Lucky -- who fell 26 stories and survived -- doesn't quite prove the myth but it comes pretty close.

In early May, Keri Hostetler was readying her lower Manhattan apartment for guests who were coming to visit. She cracked the window of her home office a few inches -- something she "never, ever did" -- just to air the place out. She left the door to the room ajar and got to work on her laundry.

Her beloved cat Lucky, a 3-year-old gray-and-black striped male who Hostetler describes as "a lover and a hugger" was wandering around the apartment. Or so Hostetler thought.

Meanwhile, across the street, two men were on scaffolding, caulking windows more than 30 stories up, when one of them spotted Lucky on a narrow ledge just across the way.

"The cat was on the ledge and we saw it trying to turn a corner. But there was no ledge for him to step on," said John Hayes, the eagle-eyed worker. "My partner told me to get my camera, so I did."

Lucky fell 26 stories before landing on a cement balcony below. Hayes was able to snap three photos: Lucky on the ledge, Lucky in midair, and Lucky's landing.

Back in the apartment, Keri noticed the door was open and the cat was missing.

"I ran around the apartment screaming for him," she said. "And then I saw the window and I knew what had happened."

When she went to the window, she saw Hayes signaling her, letting her know that the cat had indeed taken a great fall.

"I didn't know if it was dead or alive," Hayes said.

Lucky was rushed to a veterinary hospital, where he was treated for minor injuries -- a broken toe and a broken lower jaw.

At the scene of the accident, Hayes mentioned to Hostetler that he'd taken some pictures of the cat's plunge. Hostetler thanked him repeatedly for keeping a sharp eye out for her cat and waving to her so she knew that he'd fallen.

"It was just the human thing to do," Hayes said.

Hostetler just feels -- well -- "lucky" to have her cat back.

"He's incredible," she said. "He's just an amazing cat."

She recommends cat owners use screens on their windows (her home office didn't have any) and, most importantly, pet insurance.

"Get it, seriously," she said. "Even if your cat is an indoor cat. You never know."