

PLEASE DO NOT DECLAW YOUR CATS: Many veterinarians no longer practice this procedure! Declawing a cat involves surgically removing the end bones in each toe. Declawing can cause paw pain, back pain, infection, tissue necrosis (tissue death) and lameness. Removing claws changes the way a cat's feet meet the ground and can cause pain like wearing an uncomfortable pair of shoes. Improperly removed claws can regrow, causing nerve damage and bone spurs. Having your cat declawed can cause behavior changes and an inability to use the litter box due to the discomfort of their feet in the litter. There are other alternatives to declawing your cat, like nail caps. Have conversations with your Vet to find a good alternative for you and your home!

Introducing new cats to your home: SET THEM UP FOR SUCCESS! Go slow! NEVER force an interaction! Start by keeping cats in their own room to start. This will help the new cat get adjusted to sounds and smells. During this time, switch bedding/blankets to allow them to smell each other without interaction. If in a few days, this process seems normal and calm, move to the next phase. Find ways to allow them to see each other without the ability to touch. This is best done through a tall baby gate. They can learn body language and may begin to play. If this step is too much, go back to step one. You can even take turns letting one cat roam and allow them to sniff or paw under the doorway where the other cat is located. Once accustomed this way, do SUPERVISED play times until they can co-exist peacefully. This process can take weeks depending on the cat.

New Cat Checklist:

- Cat food
- Food & Water Dish
- Interactive Toys
- Brush & Claw Clippers
- Safety Cat Collar & ID Tags
- Scratching Post/Pad
- Litter
- Litter Box
- Cat Carrier
- Cat Bed & Blanket



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Thank you to "ASPCA" from some of the information used in this pamphlet

A Quick-Start Guide to Caring for Your Cat



Remember:

A cat is a lifetime commitment! A good owner will not easily give up or attempt to rehome a cat with life changes, moves etc. DO NOT take on the responsibility of ownership if you are not serious!



Vet Care: Cats should regularly see the vet just like any other domestic animal. Cats

need to be vaccinated to protect them from

panleukopenia (a deadly virus often called feline distemper), **calicivirus** (a highly contagious virus that

compromises the respiratory system), and **rhinotracheitis** (a viral herpes infection that affects the respiratory system). A rabies vaccination is required by law. This is first given at 3-6 months old and repeated a year later. If re-vaccinated on time, the vaccine can be issued every 3 years after that.



Spay & Neuter: Neutering can prevent urine spraying, decrease the urge to escape to look for a mate, and reduce fighting between males. Spaying GREATLY helps prevent breast cancer, which is often fatal, and serious infection of the uterus. **Cats can breed up to 3 times PER YEAR, so it is VITAL that your female cat is spayed to prevent unwanted litters, that lead to an overcrowding problem in shelters.**



Handling: To pick up your cat, place one hand behind their front legs and another under the hindquarters. Lift gently.

Play/Scratching: Your cat NEEDS to scratch! When your cat scratches the old outer nail sheath is pulled off and the sharp, smooth claws underneath are exposed.



Cutting your cats nails every 2-3 weeks will keep them blunt and will be less likely to harm or destroy your furniture. Provide your cat with a sturdy scratching post, at least 3 feet high which allows them to stretch completely when scratching. Many cats also like scratch pads which can be sprinkled with catnip to keep your cat interested and playful.

It may take time to figure out what toys your cat enjoys. Overall, cats delight in stalking imaginary prey.

Typically the best toys are ones that can be made to jump and dance around to look alive. Your cat can safely act out their role as a predatory by pouncing on toys instead of people's ankles. **Avoid strings, hairbands, and toys with pieces that can break off and lodge in their intestines.**



Bedding/Housing: If your cat is NOT a barn cat/feral mouser they should be **KEPT INDOORS**. Cats who are allowed outdoors can contract disease, get ticks or parasites, become lost, get hit by a car, get into fights

with other cats, or attacked by larger animals like dogs and coyotes. You are NOT doing them any favors by letting them go outside!

Food: Talk with your Veterinarian to find the best food for your cat. Be sure to feed age appropriate food. Cats can quickly become overweight, so it is important to have portioned feedings, and not free feed throughout the day. **DO NOT give cats cow's milk!** It can cause diarrhea. Use treats SPARINGLY. Most contain high amounts of sugar and fat.

Grooming: Most cats rarely need a bath but you should accustom yourself to brushing your cat regularly, ESPECIALLY if they have longer hair.

Litter Box:

Place your cats litter box in a quiet, accessible location, such as a bathroom or utility room.



Avoid moving the box unless it is ABSOLUTELY necessary. If moving must be done, its recommended to move it slowly, a few inches a day. In a multi-cat home, you should have multiple boxes. It is recommended to have 1 per cat, plus 1 extra. These should be on each floor of your home.