



What to Expect When You're Expecting

Kitten Edition



So you're thinking about bringing home a new little fluff ball! Adopting a new kitten can be exciting, but it is also a huge responsibility. Here are some tips and tricks for taking care of a kitten.

Prep:

First, let's discuss home prep. Kittens, like toddlers, have a knack for getting into everything they can lay their little paws on. This means scratching on carpet, chewing on phone chargers, and knocking things off of counters. To combat this, you're going to want to "kitten-proof" your home. Start by picking up any dangling phone chargers, headphones, or any other loose cords. If you are worried about the kitten getting on your countertops, be prepared to start training early on. Also, you'll want to stock up on cardboard scratchers and cat posts to prevent your kitten from scratching up your upholstery. Secure any precious knick-knacks that may be hanging out on that book shelf!

Litter Box Training:

Luckily, each newborn kitten comes with the instinctual knowledge that bowel and bladder elimination must be deposited in a hole dug into an earthy substance and then covered up. In other words, kittens are naturally trained to use litter. All one has to do to train a kitten is to provide the earthy substance in a box and show the kitten where it is. The kitten will take care of the rest! Be sure to purchase a litter box that isn't too deep for the kitten. ***When you get home, place the kitten in the box with some fresh litter and gently use his/her paws to scratch around in the litter.*** Positive reinforcement goes a long way! Consider giving a treat or some pets after seeing them successfully use their box.

Behavior and Correcting:

Kittens spend about half of their time sleeping and the other half playing. Most likely, the kitten will have a tendency to use his claws and teeth during play time. This roughhousing is purely offensive and part of his predatory instincts. The kitten is simply practicing his stalk and attack maneuvers on you! Believe it or not, it is possible to train your cat out of this behavior. Before weaning, a kitten who plays too roughly with her mother will be immediately warned by a growl. Similarly, if your kitten plays too roughly with you, speak loudly "OUCH!" or give a stern "No!" until they stop. Follow up with "Good kitty" and more playtime until they start to play your way. Kittens that bite and scratch at your hands do not make cute adult cats that bite and scratch at your hands! ***It is very important to NEVER punish your kitten by hitting, chasing, or throwing something at them. These acts are abusive and surely will cause your feline to become aggressive.*** If you want to avoid being this mini panther's prey, you may benefit from adopting a friend for your kitty to play with. Catnip toys, fake mice, and plastic balls are also great to have around.



Adult Cat Edition

Adopting an adult cat means that there is a good chance their purr-sonality has already formed. Adult cats are more ideal for people who may have a busier schedule and don't have time to babysit or train a kitten. Here are a few tips for taking care of your new cat.

Prep:

Cats are territorial animals, so change can be stressful and stress can cause sickness. *You'll want to make sure that you give your new buddy a small, safe, and quiet area of the house to start out in.* This will help them adjust faster than being released in a large new environment. Start them in an extra bedroom, laundry room, or bathroom with their food, water, litterbox, a bed, and somewhere for you to sit. After a few days, slowly introduce the cat to more and more areas of the house. Make sure there are plenty of places for your new kitty to get away in case he or she becomes overwhelmed. Cats, like people, enjoy time to themselves occasionally. Providing them with tall cat trees or hideaway beds are a great way to make them feel more comfortable. Overturned cardboard boxes with entrance holes cut in them make good hiding spots to start with! It's important to be patient with your new cat. It can take up to two weeks or longer for your adopted buddy to fully adjust to his or her new home.

Behavior:

Depending on the age and nature of your new adopted friend, there's a good chance he or she won't be as active as a kitten would be. You can expect your new cat to take a lot of naps throughout the day. However, adult cats also love to play and the exercise is great for them! The more active you keep your cat, the healthier it will be. They will still benefit from cat toys and scratch posts. Some adult cats are also more interested in catnip as they get older. While kittens are too busy playing and exploring, adult cats are more inclined to sit on the couch with you and watch tv. Cats love warm soft spaces so the better the blanket, the longer the cuddle time.

Introduction to their new home:

Do not reach for the cat! Let the cat come to you. If he/she doesn't approach, come back in fifteen minutes. Always leave plenty of fresh water accessible to your new kitty! Do not be surprised if he or she doesn't eat at first. It is common for rehomed cats to show no interest in eating, often for several days. Pick up the leftovers and leave. Come back in a couple of hours with a fresh meal of the same high-quality food and let the kitty eat in peace. *If after 48 hrs your kitty still isn't eating, seek out a veterinarian's advice.* If the cat is openly soliciting affection, eating and not hiding, you can open the door and give them one more room. Do this slowly until you have introduced the cat to all the rooms in his or her new home. See **Cat to Cat Introduction** and **Cat to Dog Introduction** for more information.