

MARTHA- ADOPTED JUNE 2021



Christopher Cutler Rich  
ANIMAL SHELTER

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CAPE ANN ANIMAL AID CAT ADOPTION BOOKLET

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# IMPORTANT NUMBERS

ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center

**1-888-426-4435**

MSPCA Poison Control Hotline

**1-877-226-4355**

Massachusetts Vet Referral Emergency Hospital (Woburn)

**781-932-5802**

Bulger Emergency Veterinary Hospital (North Andover)

**978-725-5544**

Angell Memorial Hospital (Boston)

**617-522-7282**

Port City Vet Referral Emergency Hospital (Portsmouth, NH)

**603-433-0056**

BluePearl Pet Hospital (Waltham)

**781-684-8387**

24PetWatch – Pet Insurance & Microchip

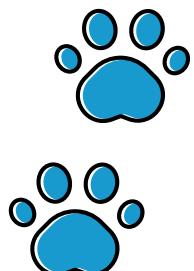
**1-866-597-2424**

Cape Ann Animal Aid

IF THERE IS NO ANSWER, PLEASE LEAVE A MESSAGE SO  
WE CAN RETURN YOUR CALL

**978-283-6055 x100**

**info@capeannanimalaid.org**



Your Cat's Veterinarian: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Important Numbers:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# WELCOME TO THE CAAA FAMILY!



@CapeAnnAnimalAid

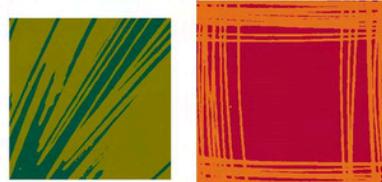


@CapeAnnAnimalAid



[CapeAnnAnimalAid.org](http://CapeAnnAnimalAid.org)

## Adoption Program Gold Sponsor



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Congratulations on your new addition! We are thrilled you made the choice to add a rescue pet to the family. Cape Ann Animal Aid is honored to be a part of your family's adoption story, and we wish you the best in your life together. We know this is a very exciting time for you and your new furry family member. We encourage you to take this time to slowly get to know your new pet and let them get to know you. Your new pet has had lots of recent changes so will really appreciate a few days to decompress with just immediate family. We have included lots of tips and tricks in this booklet that are meant to help set your new cat or kitten up for success in your home and as an important part of the family unit. We encourage you to reach out to us with any questions you may have now or in the future. We sincerely look forward to hearing from you over the years as you share companionship, laughter, adventures, and many years of love together!

Sincerely,

Sunniva Buck, Executive Director

We love to see your updates! You can find us on social media, reach out to us via email with updates, or submit a Happy Tails adoption update on our website [capeannanimalaid.org/happytails](http://capeannanimalaid.org/happytails)

# FEEDING YOUR NEW CAT



## HELP FEED SHELTER PETS!

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Home / All Products / Cat / Kitten Food (<1 Year) / Kitten Cat Food

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**Hill's Science Diet  
Kitten Cat Food, Chicken  
Recipe, Dry, 7 lb, 1 bag**

SKU: 9391

★★★★★ (140)

Food Type: Dry

Pouch Canned Dry

Flavor Variant: **Chicken Recipe**

Chicken & Brown Rice Recipe **Chicken Recipe**  
Ocean Fish & Brown Rice Recipe

Size: **7 lb, 1 bag**

3.5 lb, 1 bag **7 lb, 1 bag** 15.5 lb, 1 bag

Sub Brand: Kitten  
Food Form: Dry Food  
Primary Flavor: Chicken Recipe  
Total Pkg. Weight: 7 lbs

Select a Purchase Option

One-Time Purchase **\$34.99**

Autoship **SAVE 5% \$33.24**

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Hill's Pet donates to your shelter of choice!  
This purchase donates \$1.00 to the shelter of your choice, at no extra cost to you.

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Greater Good Charities  
600 University St Suite 1000, Seattle, WA  
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★★★★★  
Best kitten food

"Super picky kittens gobble up the dry kitten food kibble. Super

# WHAT IF MY NEW CAT ISN'T FEELING WELL?



## **Can I call the shelter for help if my new cat seems sick?**

Absolutely! We are here as a resource for many of the small medical problems that may arise within the two-week post adoption period, and we have a full vet team on staff.

We welcome you to contact us either by phone or by email to discuss any health concerns.

If you think your pet is facing a life-threatening medical emergency, please contact a veterinary emergency hospital in your area.

## **Can I use my own veterinarian?**

If you feel more comfortable consulting with your own veterinarian within the two week post adoption period, please feel free to do so with the understanding that Cape Ann Animal Aid is not financially responsible for this care.

**Adoption Program Gold Sponsor**

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Any Service

Cannot be combined with other discounts, offers, coupons, or used towards gift cards. Discount applies only if any recommended services have been performed.

**CranneyHomeServices.com**

An advertisement for Cranney Home Services. It features a golden retriever named Wilson wearing a red shirt with a name tag that says "HELLO WILSON". The ad includes the company's logo, phone number, services offered, a discount offer, and a website address.

## **What if I think my new cat has a cold?**

In the first two weeks post adoption your new pet may develop a cough or other signs of a respiratory infection (discharge from nose or eyes, or a fever).

If your new pet is sneezing but they have no discharge (or clear discharge) and they are still eating, drinking, and playing normally, we recommend you monitor them. Just like humans, pets can occasionally get a cold virus that just has to run its course.

If your pet starts to have colored discharge from the eyes or nose, behaves differently (tired, uncomfortable, or act like they may have a fever), then they most likely need some additional medical care.

# WHAT IF MY NEW CAT ISN'T FEELING WELL?



## *What if I think my new cat has an upset stomach?*

Your newly adopted pet can sometimes have intestinal upset in the form of vomiting or diarrhea soon after joining your family. These are common causes of digestive upset:

- Stress of changing environments
- Changing food
- Too many treats
- Parasites

Sometimes vomiting and diarrhea can be signs of serious illness. These conditions indicate that your pet needs immediate medical care:

- Repeated projectile vomiting
- Vomiting that continues for more than 24 hours
- Diarrhea that continues for more than 24 hours
- Diarrhea or vomit with large amounts of blood in it

## *Could the spay/neuter site be infected?*

If your newly adopted pet has had a recent spay or neuter surgery, try to keep them a little calmer until the incision has completely healed. A small amount of swelling can be a normal reaction to surgery. These conditions indicate that your pet needs additional medical attention:

- Swelling that continues to increase
- Redness that expands around the site
- Discharge from the site
- An opening of the incision

# UPPER RESPIRATORY INFECTIONS IN CATS

Unfortunately, some adopted cats may develop signs of upper respiratory infection (URI) within a few days of being adopted. Some animals may have been exposed to the respiratory viruses before they were adopted. Typically, it takes a few days to a week between exposure and the development of symptoms.

## **What are the symptoms of URI?**

The symptoms of URI are fever, sneezing, discharge from the eyes and nose, and sometimes drooling. Discharges from the eyes and nose are clear and watery to start but may become thick and cloudy. Depression and loss of appetite may also develop. Although the disease can be fatal in very young kittens or very old cats, most cases resolve in about 7-10 days.

## **Is URI contagious?**

The illness is not contagious to humans. However, it is very contagious to other cats. Infected cats should be kept isolated from other cats. If you handle an infected cat you should wash your hands before handling any others.

## **How is URI transmitted?**

URI is transmitted by direct contact with infected cats or discharge from their eyes, nose, or mouth. The virus can also be spread to other cats through contaminated clothing, hands, feeding utensils, grooming equipment and other articles. Sneezing also propels viral particles into the air as the virus can be transmitted short distances when attached to the moisture droplets.



## **How can we treat a URI?**

If your cat/kitten is showing signs of URI you should monitor their behavior closely. If they are eating, drinking and maintaining a normal activity level, the cat may not need medication. If the cat seems depressed, lethargic, stops eating or drinking, or is very congested and has difficulty breathing, contact the shelter or your veterinarian for assistance. Most respiratory infections can be treated at home. Depending on the severity of the case, your vet may prescribe antibiotics to prevent secondary infection, and/or decongestants.

# FIV AND FELV IN CATS



## **What are FIV and FeLV?**

Feline Leukemia Virus (FeLV) and Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV) are two contagious viral organisms that infect cats. They affect the immune system and can cause increased susceptibility to many diseases and cancers. Your vet can tell you more about symptoms, treatment options, and possible vaccinations.

## **Could my new cat have FIV and/or FeLV?**

We at the Cape Ann Animal Aid (CAAA) tests all incoming cats/kittens prior to adoption in an effort to ensure that the animal we are placing into your home is healthy. However, there is an incubation period for both diseases. We strongly suggest that you discuss FIV/FeLV retesting your new cat or kitten with your veterinarian.

# MICROCHIP & PET INSURANCE



## Welcome to the family!



Dear Adopter,

Congratulations! You've made the generous and meaningful decision to adopt your new pet. Keeping them happy, safe and home is a big responsibility, and we're here to help.

You can count on 24Petwatch® and all our personalized services to help you care for your pet, every day. Whether it's an essentials checklist or pro tips on how to bond with your new pet, or help finding your pet if they go missing, you're family now, and we've got you covered.

**Create your account**

**Your pet's microchip is already registered with 24Petwatch. Now it's your turn!**

Create your account to verify that your contact information on your pet's microchip registry is accurate (there's no cost). This important step will help us reunite you if your pet ever goes missing and is found. PLUS, you'll get access to these benefits:



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**What is pet insurance?**

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**Why choose coverage?**

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\*Pre-existing conditions are not covered. Waiting periods, annual deductible, co-insurance, benefit limits and exclusions may apply. For all terms and conditions visit [www.24Petprotect.com/terms](http://www.24Petprotect.com/terms). Products, schedules, and rates may vary and are subject to change. Discounts may vary and are subject to change. More information available at checkout.

Insurance products are underwritten by United States Fire Insurance Company (NAIC #21113, Morristown, NJ), and produced and administered by PTZ Insurance Agency, Ltd. (NPN: 5328528. Domiciled in Illinois with offices at 1708 Mission Road, Suite G200, Akron, Ohio 44306). (California residents only: PTZ Insurance Agency, Ltd., d/b/a PIA Insurance Agency, Ltd. CA license #E36937). 24Petprotect is a brand name.



## EXCLUSIVE BENEFITS FOR ADOPTED CATS

### Adopted Cats' Behavior Tips for Easy Home Integration

Understanding and supporting your adopted cat's unique behavior can help them settle into your home more easily. Watch for signals like hiding or slow blinking to make them feel safe. Creating a quiet space and establishing a routine will help them adjust better. We're here to guide you through this process!



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**Free** consultation with  
our feline behavior  
specialist.

Since 2023, **Dogtown** has proudly partnered with **Cape Ann Animal Aid**, a non-profit organization that has transformed countless lives through rescue, care, and adoption.

At Dogtown, we believe in carrying that mission forward. That's why we've partnered with Cape Ann Animal Aid to ensure that every adopted pet not only leaves the shelter with love but also with the tools to live a healthier, happier life.

**Together, we give every adopted pet a brighter future.**

**Dogtown** - 210 Eastern ave, Gloucester

# BRINGING YOUR NEW CAT HOME



## Where should I keep my new cat?

When you first bring your new cat home it's important to set him/her up in one small room with all the necessary supplies including: food, water, litter pan, bed, toys, and a scratching post. Housing your new cat in one room during the transition period will go a long way towards creating a strong bond between your family and your new pet. This gives your new cat time to adjust to all of the new changes in life and allows you to socialize with the cat even if they are nervous and feel the need to hide. Additionally, when you isolate your new pet in one room you are giving yourself an opportunity to teach the cat and giving your cat the chance to learn the rules of your home. Leaving a new feline pal unattended and loose in the house can lead to some bad habits like scratching woodwork or furniture items, eating house plants, climbing over counters, and house soiling.

## What can I do to make my cat feel more at home?

Imagine that you were taken home by giant aliens who spoke a foreign language, had rules you had never heard of and that you could not understand. You, like your new pet, would be confused, frightened, and bound to offend someone, even if all you were trying to do was communicate your needs. We recommend that you spend as much time as possible just sitting in the room with your cat. Read a book or catch up on your paperwork and allow your new cat to approach you. It is important to speak to your cat using a soft voice, move slowly, and treat gently. They don't know you yet and may easily be frightened by being picked up often or by being pet before they have learned to trust you.

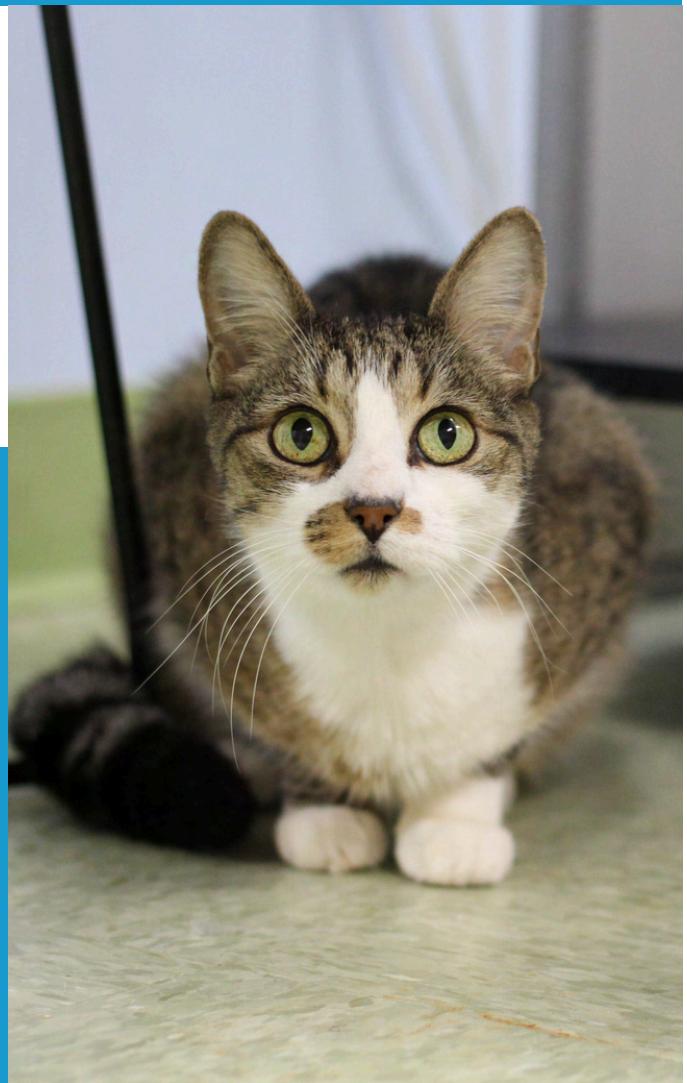
# BRINGING YOUR NEW CAT HOME

## **What if my new cat is hiding from me?**

Do not be alarmed if your cat is hiding from you. Some cats will hide for a week or longer until they realize they are in a safe place. We suggest trying to tempt them out of the hiding space by offering a tasty treat or feeding them only when you are in the room so only positive associations are made.

## **When can I let my new cat out of this small room?**

Once your cat has adjusted to the smells and sounds of their new home, you can gradually allow them access to the rest of the house one room at a time. This method of introducing a new cat to the house does take more effort and patience on your part, but if you slowly expose your cat to your home, supervise them and use positive reinforcement, you will soon have a cat that can be trusted to lounge and play all day around your finest things.



## **How can I teach my new cat the “rules of the house”?**

Having a cat that understands the rules for living with your family, is having a cat that is a joy to live with and therefore more likely to become a forever valued and loved member of your family. Cats can and should be taught some basic rules for living with people. Training doesn't just apply to dogs; often we cat owners forget that felines are capable of learning and should be taught some basic rules of behavior. It is best to use positive reinforcement to encourage behaviors you want to see from your new pet. If you keep your new cat in one room for the first 2 weeks and then gradually allow her access to one new room at a time, you will have more opportunities to praise them for appropriate things like clawing a scratching post or using the litter box. When you see the cat doing something good it is important to give some soft verbal praise. After they are done (do not interrupt her actions with your praise) you should reward them immediately with a gentle pet or scratch and a yummy treat or tidbit. By praising your new cat for these actions, they will quickly understand what type of behavior you expect and appreciate.

# LITTER BOX SET UP

## **What kind of litter should I use?**

Try to find out what type of litter your new cat is familiar with and use it (we use wood pellets at the shelter). Many cats are finicky about the texture and scent of their bathroom area. For example, offering a cat litter made of wood pellets or strongly scented clay may offend your cat if they are used to using non-scented, finely ground clay, causing them to find another spot in the house to toilet.

## **How often should I clean the litter box?**

A dirty litter box is a huge deterrent to most cats. Some cats are very clean and will not want to use a box that has any soil in it. Be sure to scoop all solid waste from the litter box at least once a day and completely change all the litter twice a week. Don't use harsh chemicals or strongly scented cleaners, because these may leave a "feline offensive odor" no matter how much you rinse.



## **What type of litter box should I buy?**

Some cats prefer open litter boxes and only feel safe when they can see their surroundings. Other cats prefer a covered litter box and the privacy it offers. Make sure, whatever style litter box you choose, that the box itself is large enough to accommodate your new cat and low enough that they can easily enter and exit.

## **Where should I put the litter box?**

Most cats like a quiet out of the way spot to do their toileting; placing their litter pan next to loud noises such as a running washing machine or heavy traffic areas can be very disturbing and cause your pet to avoid the litter pan.

**Positive associations are important!** Remember never punish, medicate or do anything your cat may view as negative in the same room that her litter pan is in, you want all associations around her litter pan to be positive ones.

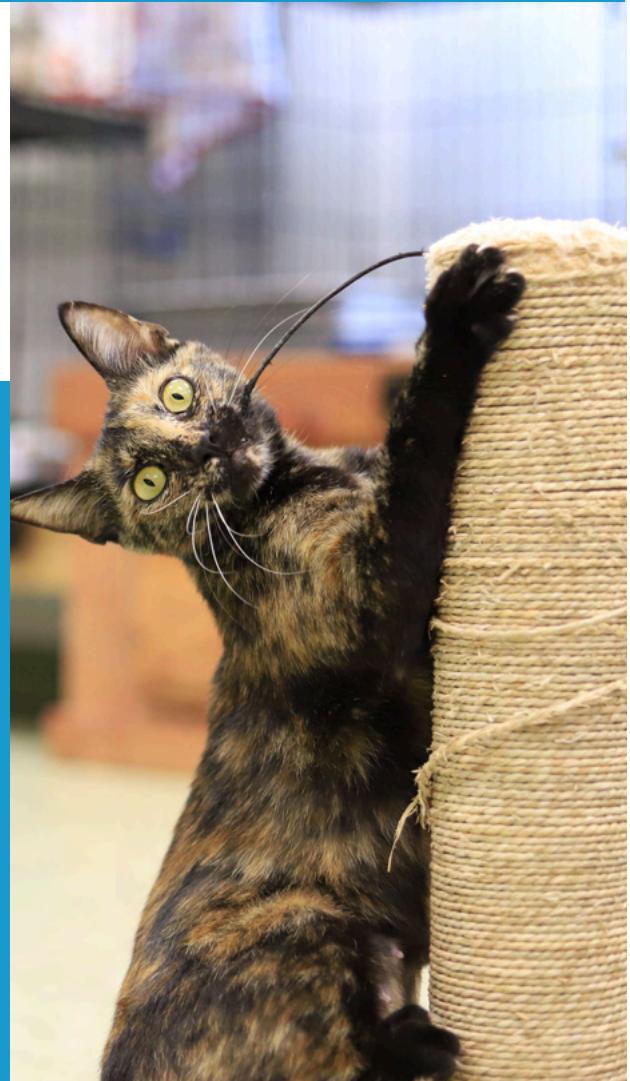
# SCRATCHING POST SET UP

## **Why do cats scratch things?**

Cats need to scratch for physical and psychological reasons. They scratch to mark territory, for the health of their nails, for exercise, and for fun. It is important to make a scratching area for your new cat--one that they will adore and where you can encourage healthy and positive scratching behaviors.

## **What kind of scratching post should I buy?**

Scratching posts should be tall enough so that your cat can completely stretch out their front legs while standing up against the post. Your post should have a sturdy base so that it cannot be accidentally tipped over by an enthusiastic scratcher. Cats like a rough surface to scratch on such as wood-bark, hemp (rope), or the rough back weave of carpeting. Using plush carpeted scratching posts can be confusing to some cats. If your cat is given, and encouraged to use, a scratching post covered in soft plush carpeting then it is easy to see how your cat may think scratching the plush carpet covering your living-room floor is okay too!



## **How can I get my cat to use the scratching post?**

Make your cat's scratching post impossible to resist. Place the scratching post near a sunny window, mount some toys and feather teasers so they dangle from the top of the post (this encourages your cat to use her nails to pounce on the post to get at the playthings). You can also rub the scratching post with catnip or try growing catnip nearby. If the post is next to a window try attaching a window seat. Cats adore lounging in the sun and it is a great reason for the cat to spend time next to the post.

Remember to use positive reinforcement techniques to encourage your cat to use the scratching post. (More info about positive training can be found on page 7)

## **How can I stop my cat from scratching the furniture?**

One great tip is to place double sided sticky tape on the edges of your furniture. Cats detest sticky paws and if she decides to try scratching the arm of the couch but sticky tape instead of couch fabric they will most likely head back to the scratching post.

# NOCTURNAL BEHAVIOR

*The following information was provided by the ASPCA National Shelter Outreach program.  
"Surviving the Feline Teens" by Jacque Lynn Schultz, ©ASPCA, Rev. 2001.*

Did your cat keep you up last night? Contrary to popular belief, cats are not nocturnal creatures the way bats and raccoons are, but latchkey adolescents have been known to get restless, usually near dawn. When cats hunt, they stalk, pounce, kill and then eat their prey. Replicating this predatory ritual by playing interactive games and then serving dinner can be tremendously satisfying for your cat. A 10-minute play session followed by a fashionably late dinner does wonders for an early rising youngster.

Make sure you are not inadvertently teaching your cat any bad habits. If he cries loud and long and you get up to (a) feed him, (b) play with him, (c) cuddle with him, or (d) all of the above, he will be rewarded for his bad behavior and will repeat the annoying behavior over and over. Do not give in to his commands. Play possum. Draw the covers up over your head and ignore his demands. A behavior that is not rewarded will eventually extinguish.

For those who can't stand it a minute more, create a play space/bedroom for your cat in a room like the bathroom. A litter box, bed, and various types of toys dangling off doorknobs and towel racks should fill the environment. This will be your cat's bedroom until he outgrows his pre-dawn antsiness. Don't wait until he wakes you up; tuck him in there at bedtime. He earns access to your bed by his stellar behavior—by learning to sleep until you say so.



# EXERCISING AND PLAYING WITH YOUR CAT



## ***Why is exercise and playing with my new cat important?***

Playing with your cat can be one of the best parts of living with a cat! Playing with your cat helps to keep them in shape; running, stretching and pouncing activities all exercise muscles keeping them healthy and trim. Playing with your cat not only helps to keep them emotionally and physically healthy, it is a perfect way to bond with the cat. Young cats and kittens should have at least two play sessions with you a day (having a play session about 1 hour before you go to bed can greatly reduce the nocturnal nuisances juveniles are infamous for). Playing with your cat and offering them a frequently changing selection of toys helps prevent boredom from setting in.

## ***What kind of toys will my new cat need?***

There is a huge variety of cat toys available for purchase at most pet supply stores. However, lots of everyday household items can be turned into cat toys that will amuse for hours! It is most important to invest in both interactive toys for the two of you to play together and toys that they can manipulate on their own.

You don't have to think up new items or constantly purchase new toys to keep their interest, gather a collection of ten toys allow them access to 4 or 5 and then rotate them, every few days switch some of the toys, in this manner you will keep things new and interesting. Whether you purchase, find or make your cat's toys make sure the toys are safe. Avoid toys with tinsel or tiny parts (such as plastic eyes and ears) that your cat can chew off and swallow leading to potential choking or intestinal obstructions.

# EXERCISING AND PLAYING WITH YOUR CAT

## **Great ways to play with and entertain your new cat**

Some excellent activities include dragging bits of string across the floor for your cat to chase or toss bits of crinkled up paper to pounce on. Enjoy your cat's antics while you lounge in your armchair and use a laser light to entice them to chase, practice summersaults, pounces and more!



### **Ideas from Catnip: The Newsletter for Caring Cat Owners (Vol.14, No.10, Oct. 2006. p. 5)**

- Stuff play balls with treats
- Get puzzle or track toys that contain prizes inside
- Timed food or treat dispensers
- Mobiles and wands that cats can swat (but not get tangled)
- Rotating your cat's favorite toys
- Animal videos or audio tapes
- Climbing trees or frames
- Sturdy scratching post
- A fish tank (safely covered or out of paw's reach)
- Bird feeders outside a window
- Enclosed outdoor area

### **Cat Entertainment Products provided by Catnip: The Newsletter for Caring Cat Owners (Vol.15, No.3, Mar. 2007. p 17-20.)**

- Pavlov's Cat Scratch Feeder ®: [petsbestproducts.com](http://petsbestproducts.com)
- Play-N-Treat ® : [ourpets.com](http://ourpets.com)
- Tricky Treat Ball: [omegapaw.com](http://omegapaw.com)
- Groovy™ Catnip Sticks: [ourpets.com](http://ourpets.com)
- Talk To Me ® Treatball: [www.talktometreatball.com](http://www.talktometreatball.com)
- Cat Mate C50 Automatic Pet Feeder/C20 Automatic Pet Feeder: [amazon.com](http://amazon.com)
- Smart Cat ™ Peek-A-Prize Toy Box: [esmartcat.com](http://esmartcat.com)
- Play-N-Squeak® Mouse with Door Hanger: [www.ourpets.com](http://www.ourpets.com)



For every new customer purchase through our special link, Chewy will donate \$15 to Cape Ann Animal Aid!

Shop here: [prf.hn/click/camref:11001fdSr](http://prf.hn/click/camref:11001fdSr)

# TEACH YOUR KITTEN HOW TO PLAY NICE



## ***Learning to play nice***

Kittens learn how to inhibit their bite from their mothers and littermates. A kitten who is separated from their family too early may not have learned appropriate play behavior, leading to unwanted nipping. Kittens also learn acceptable play from us. If people use their hands and feet instead of toys to play with a young kitten, the kitten may learn that rough play is okay.

In most cases, it's not too difficult to teach your kitten or young adult cat that rough play isn't acceptable. If play escalates too quickly, follow these tips to keep playtime interesting and reduce the number of trips to the first-aid kit.

- Don't let your kitten play with your hands or feet (or any other body part). This sends the message that your fingers and toes are prey for pouncing.
- Use a fishing pole-type toy or throw a toy for them to chase – this keeps them away from your hands and body.
- Give your kitten something to wrestle with. This is one of the ways kittens play with each other, and how they're trying to play when they grapple with human feet and hands, so it's important to provide this type of alternative.
- Encourage play with a "wrestling toy" by rubbing it against your kitten's belly when they have an urge to play roughly—just be sure to get your hand out of the way as soon as they accept the toy.
- Don't hit or yell at your kitten when they nip or pounce. This will only make them fearful of you and they may start to avoid you. The idea is to train them, not punish them.

# TEACH YOUR KITTEN HOW TO PLAY NICE

## ***Discouraging "bad" behavior***

Playing is not bad behavior, but you do have to set the rules for your kitten: no biting. Everyone in the household has to be on the same page. Your kitten can't be expected to learn that it's okay to play rough with certain people but not with others.

### ***A gnawing problem***

If you're petting your kitten and they start gnawing on you, immediately say "no" and carefully take your hands away. Give them a toy to play with instead and don't try to pet them again until they're tuckered out. You can also make your hands unattractive to your kitten by putting a bad tasting, but harmless, substance on them, like Bitter Apple or Tabasco sauce to deter biting.

### ***Gimmie that!***

Kittens always seem to want to play with whatever you're using — knitting needles, a pencil, headphone cords. If your kitten starts "attacking" you when you're working, sharply say "no" to disrupt their behavior. Then give them one of their own toys. Be sure they are not attacking when you give them a toy or they may think they're being rewarded for biting.

### ***On the hunt***

Kittens also like to "hunt" you while you're walking around. They'll jump out from behind a door or under a chair and pounce on your ankles. If they don't emerge but don't pounce, praise them with "good kitty," but reprimand them if they aim for your ankles.

### ***Pay no attention***

Withdraw attention when your kitten doesn't get the message. If the distraction and redirection techniques don't work, the most drastic thing you can do to discourage your cat from rough play is to withdraw all attention.

The best way to withdraw your attention is to walk to another room and close the door long enough for them to calm down. If you pick them up to put them in another room, then you're rewarding them by touching them, so you should always be the one to leave the room. Remember, your kitten wants to play with you, not just toys, so be sure to set aside time for regular, safe and interactive play sessions.

# FINDING A LOST CAT

## **What if my new cat gets lost?**

While your cat can go missing at any point in time, they're especially vulnerable in the first few months after adoption while your bond is still forming. Take care to prevent loss by making sure your cat is wearing a breakaway collar (with ID tag).

## **What can I do if my cat gets lost?**

**LOOK AROUND YOUR HOUSE.** Your pet may be in a closet, a dark corner, or even inside bulky furniture and other small places. Try making cues that usually interest your pet (opening the dog food container or squeaking a favorite toy).

**GET THE WORD OUT.** Go door to door and let your neighbors know your pet is missing. Sometimes, pets hide in a neighbor's garage or have found an open window and may be hiding or accidentally locked in a basement or shed etc.

**CONTACT THE MICROCHIP COMPANY.** All animals adopted from Cape Ann Animal Aid have been microchipped. Contact the company where the microchip is registered and let them know your pet is missing. Make sure your contact information in association with the microchip is up to date.



**USE COMMUNICATION CHANNELS.** Call/email all local animal shelters, groomers, animal control, and veterinary offices to report your missing pet. You should also bring them a flyer to post. Visit our Lost Pets webpage ([www.capecannanimalaid.org/lostpets](http://www.capecannanimalaid.org/lostpets)) and fill out a Lost Pet Report Form. Utilize social media networks and send emails to friends, family, and coworkers. Post messages and pictures on online message boards and forums. Ask everyone to pass on the info to anyone in the area.

**RUN AN AD IN THE PAPER.** Place an ad in the local paper. Some papers will run lost and found messages in the classified sections for free or at a low cost.

**MAKE FLYERS.** Make flyers to hand out and post around the area with your pet's picture and a description:

- Use a large and clear font that can be easily read.
- Include a phone number that somebody will answer or that has voicemail.
- If you chose to offer a reward, use caution in responding to people who claim to have found your pet.
- Ask businesses if you can post a flyer in their store.

# CAT LANGUAGE

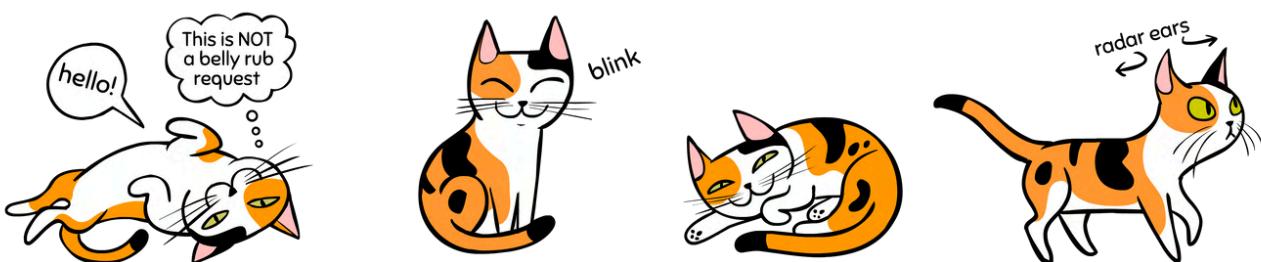


INTERESTED

FRIENDLY

ATTENTIVE

RELAXED

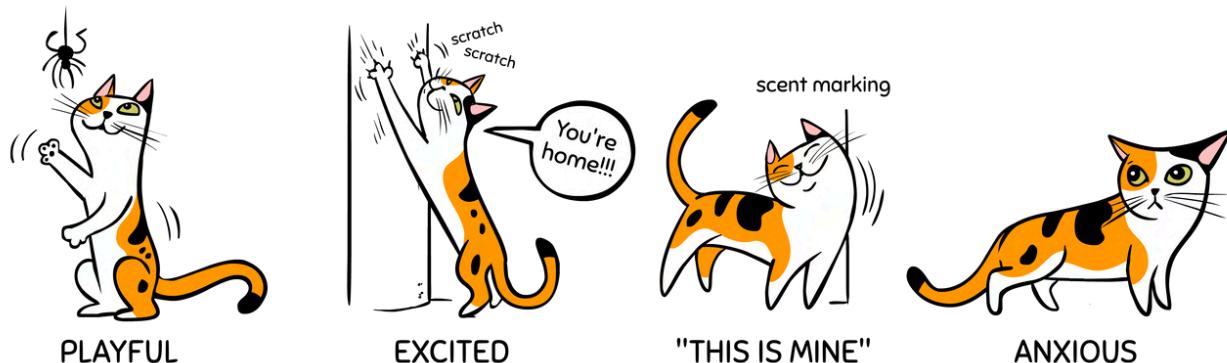


TRUSTING

FRIENDLY, RELAXED

CONTENT

CONFICTED, CAUTIOUS



PLAYFUL

EXCITED

"THIS IS MINE"

ANXIOUS



PREDATORY



WORRIED



FRIGHTENED



THREATENED



TERRIFIED



SUPER TERRIFIED



IRRITATED



DISGUSTED

# Interactive CAT Play

by Dr. Mikel Delgado



Toys that are left lying on the floor are "dead". They are boring. Fun toys are like **prey!** They are usually small and quiet, and **they move!**

Playing is an **interactive** experience: a simulated hunting experience that gives cats physical exercise and stimulates their brains. We tailor our play to our individual cat's needs. Are they a generalist or a specialist?

Playing is also a way to bond with our cat. Not all cats like to be cuddled.

Make play a daily habit or activity. eg, before their dinner or bedtime, and whenever they have the zoomies! Just as dogs need to go out for walks and to sniff, cats need **enrichment** and shouldn't be sleeping all day.

## Prey Types

for the SPECIALIST HUNTER\*

### feathers



eg, Da Bird

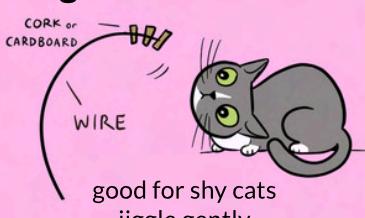
### mouse-like



eg, Cat Catcher

drag it away or across

### bug-like



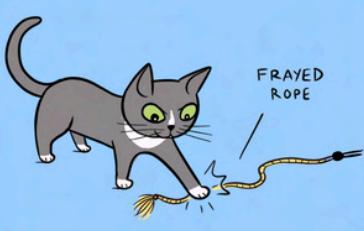
eg, Cat Dancer

CORK or  
CARDBOARD

WIRE

good for shy cats  
jiggle gently

### snake-like



eg, Bamboozler

FRAYED  
ROPE

### food puzzles

Introduce as a choice and never force. Many cats enjoy these.  
[foodpuzzlesforcats.com](http://foodpuzzlesforcats.com)



### laser toys

...can be frustrating because cats can't catch them. Best use for short periods as a warm-up, then switch to a real toy.

**NOVELTY:** Rotate the toys to keep things interesting!

\*For safety reasons, interactive toys with string/wire should be stored securely after play.

Have you played with your cat TODAY?



Illustrated by Lili Chin 2021





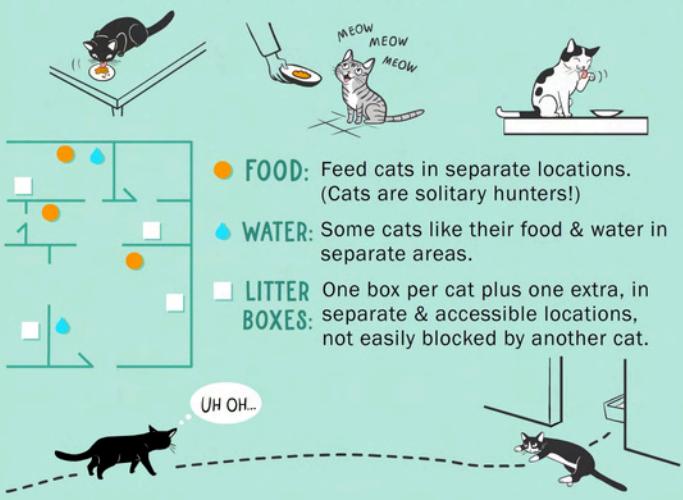
# CATS need...



## 1. SAFE SPACES in Every Room



## 2. MULTIPLE Separate Resources



## 3. PLAY & Predatory Behaviors



## 4. POSITIVE & CONSISTENT Social Interactions



## 5. FAMILIAR SCENTS for Trust & Security



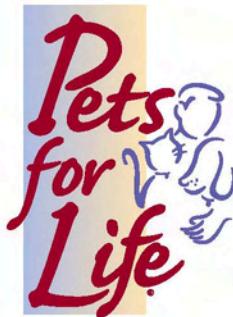
## 6. REWARD BASED TRAINING for Good Welfare



ILLUSTRATION: Lili Chin [doggiedrawings.net/freeposters](http://doggiedrawings.net/freeposters)

REFERENCES: "PURR: The Science of Making Your Cat Happy" by Zazie Todd (2022)

"AAFP and ISFM Feline Environmental Needs Guidelines" by Sarah Ellis & Colleagues (2013)



# Introducing Your New Cat to Your Other Pets

**W**OULDN'T IT BE NICE if all it took to introduce a new cat to your resident pet were a brief handshake and a couple of "HELLO, My Name Is..." name-tags? Unfortunately, it's not quite that simple, which means you'll need to have some realistic expectations from the outset.

What are realistic expectations? First, it's recognizing and accepting that your pets may never be best buddies but will usually come to at least tolerate each other. Second, it's understanding the need to move slowly during the introduction process to increase your chances for success.

Some cats are more social than other cats. For example, an eight-year-old cat who has never been around other animals may never learn to share her territory (and her people) with other pets in the household. But an eight-week-old kitten separated from her mom and littermates for the first time might be glad to have a cat or dog companion.

Cats are territorial, and they need to be introduced to other animals very slowly so they can get used to each other before a face-to-face confrontation. Slow introductions help prevent fearful and aggressive problems from developing. Here are guidelines to help make the introductions go smoothly.

## Confinement

Confine your new cat to one medium-sized room with her litter box, food, water, and a bed. Feed your resident pets and the newcomer on each side of the door to this room, so that they associate something enjoyable (eating!) with each other's smells. Gradually move the dishes closer to the door until your pets can eat calmly while standing directly on either side of the door.

## The Old Switcheroo

Swap the sleeping blankets or beds used by all the cats so they each have a chance to become accustomed to the other cats' scents. You can even rub a towel on one animal and put it underneath the food dish of another animal.

Once your new cat is using her litter box and eating regularly while confined, let her have free time in the house while confining your other animals to the new cat's room. This switch provides another way for the animals to experience each other's scents without a face-to-face meeting. It also allows the newcomer to become familiar with her new surroundings without being frightened by the other animals.

Next, after the animals have been returned to their original designated parts of the house, use two doorstops to prop open the dividing door just enough to allow the animals to see each other, and repeat the whole process over a period of days—supervised, of course.

## Slow and Steady Wins the Race

It's better to introduce your pets to each other gradually so that neither animal becomes afraid or aggressive. You can expect a mild protest from either cat from time to time, but don't allow these behaviors to intensify. If either animal becomes fearful or aggressive, separate them, and start the introduction process once again with a series of very small, gradual steps, as outlined above.

Note: When you introduce pets to each other, one of them may send "play" signals which can be misinterpreted by the other pet as signs of aggression. If that's the case, always handle the situation as "aggression" and seek professional help from a veterinarian or animal behaviorist right away.

*continued on reverse side*

## Precautionary Measures

Try to keep your resident pets' schedules close to what they were before the newcomer's arrival. Before bringing a new pet home, check with your veterinarian to be sure all your current pets are healthy. You'll also want to have at least one litter box per cat in separate locations. Make sure that none of the cats are being "ambushed" by another while trying to use the litter box, and be sure each cat has a safe hiding place.

If small spats (hissing, growling, or posturing) do occur between your cats, you shouldn't attempt to intervene directly to separate the cats. Instead, make a loud noise, throw a pillow, or use a squirt bottle with water and vinegar to separate the cats. Give them a chance to calm down before reintroducing them to each other.

## Cat-to-Dog Introductions

You'll need to be even more careful when introducing a dog and a cat to one another. A dog can seriously injure and even kill a cat very easily, even if they're only playing—all it takes is one quick shake to break the cat's neck. Some dogs have such a high prey drive that they should never be left alone with a cat. Dogs usually want to chase and play with cats, and cats usually become afraid and defensive. In addition to using the techniques described above to begin introducing your new cat to your resident dog, take these steps:

### Practice Obedience

If your dog doesn't already know the commands "sit," "down," "come," and "stay," begin working on them right away. Small pieces of food will increase your dog's motivation to perform, which will be necessary in the presence of a strong distraction such as a new cat. Even if your dog already knows these commands, work to reinforce these commands in return for a tidbit.

### Set Up Controlled Meetings

After your new cat and resident dog have become comfortable eating on opposite sides of the door and have been exposed to each other's scents as described above, you can attempt a face-to-face introduction in a controlled manner. Put your dog's leash on and have him either sit or lie down and stay for treats. Have a second person offer your cat some special pieces of food. At first, the cat and the dog should be on opposite sides of the room. Lots of short visits are better than a few long visits. Don't drag out the visit so long that the dog becomes uncontrollable. Repeat this step several times until both the cat and dog are tolerating each other's presence without fear, aggression, or other undesirable behavior.

### Let Your Cat Go

Next, allow your cat some freedom to explore your dog at her own pace, with the dog still on-leash and in a "down-

stay." Meanwhile, keep giving your dog treats and praise for his calm behavior. If your dog gets up from his "stay" position, he should be repositioned with a treat lure and praised and rewarded for obeying the "stay" command. If your cat runs away or becomes aggressive, you're progressing too fast. Go back to the previous introduction steps.

### Use Positive Reinforcement

Although your dog must be taught that chasing or being rough with your cat is unacceptable behavior, he must also be taught what is appropriate and be rewarded for those behaviors, such as sitting, coming when called, or lying down in return for a treat. If your dog is always punished when your cat is around and never has "good things" happen in the cat's presence, your dog may redirect aggression toward the cat.

### Directly Supervise All Interactions Between Your Dog and Cat

You may want to keep your dog at your side and on-leash whenever your cat is free in the house during the introduction process. Be sure that your cat has an escape route and a place to hide. And until you're certain your cat will be safe, be sure to keep the two separated when you aren't home.

### Kittens and Puppies

Because they're so much smaller, kittens are in more danger of being injured or killed by a young energetic dog or by a predatory dog. A kitten will need to be kept separate from an especially energetic dog until she is fully grown, except for periods of supervised interaction to enable the animals to get to know each other.

Even after the cat is fully grown, she may not be able to be safely left alone with the dog. Usually, a well-socialized cat will be able to keep a puppy in his place, but some cats don't have enough confidence to do this. If you have an especially shy cat, you might need to keep her separated from your puppy until he matures enough to have more self-control.

### When to Get Help

If introductions don't go smoothly, seek professional advice immediately from a veterinarian or animal-behavior specialist. Animals can be severely injured in fights, and the longer the problem continues, the harder it can be to resolve. Punishment won't work and could make things worse. Luckily, most conflicts between pets in the same family can often be resolved with professional guidance.

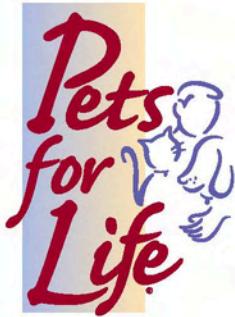
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BEHAVIOR  
SERIES

# Solving Litter Box Problems

**I***F YOU'RE HAVING A HARD TIME* persuading your cat to head for the litter box when it's appropriate, it may be time to draw a line in the sand. Most cats prefer eliminating on a loose, grainy substance, which is why they quickly learn to use a litter box. But when their preferences include the laundry basket, the bed, or the Persian rug, you may find yourself with a difficult problem. By taking a closer look at your cat's environment, you should be able to identify factors that have contributed to the litter box problem and make changes that encourage your cat to head for the litter box once again.

A common reason why cats don't use the litter box is an aversion to the box, such as dislike of a covered box or dissatisfaction with the depth of the litter. Two other common reasons your cat may avoid the litter box are a preference for a particular type of litter not provided in the box or a preference for a particular location where there is no box.

Sometimes the problem is a combination of all three factors. To get to the answer, you'll need to do a little detective work—and remember, the original source of the problem may not be the reason it's continuing. For example, your cat may have stopped using the litter box because of a urinary tract infection, and then developed a surface preference for carpet and a location preference for the bedroom closet. If that's the case, you'll need to address all three of these factors to resolve the problem.

Cats don't stop using their litter boxes because they're upset at their human caregivers and determined to get revenge for something that offended or angered them. Because humans act for these reasons, it's easy for us to assume that our pets do as well. But animals don't act out of spite or revenge, so it won't help to punish your cat or give her special privileges in the hope that she'll start using the litter box again.

## Medical Problems

It's common for cats with medical problems to begin eliminating outside of their litter boxes. For example, a urinary tract infection or crystals in the urine can make urination very painful—and both are serious conditions that require medical attention. Cats often associate this pain with the litter box and begin to avoid it. So if your cat has a house-soiling problem, check with your veterinarian first to rule

out any medical problems as a cause of the behavior. Cats don't always act sick even when they are, and only a trip to the veterinarian for a thorough physical examination can rule out a medical problem.

## Cleaning Soiled Areas

Because animals are highly motivated to continue soiling an area that smells like urine or feces—and because cats' sense of smell is so much stronger than humans'—it's important to thoroughly and properly clean the soiled areas.

## Aversion to the Litter Box

Your cat may have decided that the litter box is an unpleasant place to eliminate if:

- The box is not clean enough for her.
- She has experienced painful urination or defecation in the box due to a medical problem.
- She has been startled by a noise while using the box.
- She has been ambushed while in the box either by another cat, a child, a dog, or by you, if you were attempting to catch her for some reason.
- She associates the box with punishment (for example, someone punished her for eliminating outside the box, then placed her in the box).

## What You Can Do

Keep the litter box extremely clean. Scoop at least once a day and change the litter completely every four to five days. If you use scoopable litter, you may not need to change the litter as frequently, depending on the number of cats in the household, the size of the cats, and the number of litter boxes.

If you can smell the box, then you can be pretty sure it's offensive to your cat as well.

Add a new box in a different location, and use a different type of litter in the new box. Because your cat has decided that her old litter box is unpleasant, you'll want to make the new one different enough that she doesn't simply apply the old, negative associations to the new box.

Make sure that the litter box isn't near an appliance (such as a furnace) that makes noise, or in an area of the home that your cat doesn't frequent.

If ambushing is a problem, create more than one exit from the litter box, so that if the "ambusher" is waiting by one area, your cat always has an escape route.

If you have multiple cats, provide one litter box for each cat, plus one extra box in a different location.

## Surface Preferences

All animals develop preferences for a particular surface on which they like to eliminate. These preferences may be established early in life, but they may also change overnight for reasons that we don't always understand. Your cat may have a surface preference if:

- She consistently eliminates on a particular texture—for example, soft-textured surfaces such as carpeting, bedding, or clothing, or slick-textured surfaces such as tile, cement, bathtubs, or sinks.
- She frequently scratches on this same texture after elimination, even if she eliminates in the litter box.
- She is or was previously an outdoor cat and prefers to eliminate on grass or soil.

## What You Can Do

If you recently changed the type or brand of your cat's litter, go back to providing the litter that your cat had been using. If your cat is eliminating on soft surfaces, try using a high-quality scoopable litter.

If your cat is eliminating on slick, smooth surfaces, try putting a very thin layer of litter at one end of the box, leaving the other end bare, and put the box on a hard floor.

If your cat has a history of being outdoors, add some soil or sod to the litter box.

To discourage your cat from using a certain area, cover the area with an upside-down carpet runner or aluminum foil, or place citrus-scented cotton balls over the area.

## Related topics at [www.petsforlife.org](http://www.petsforlife.org)

- [Removing Pet Stains and Odors](#)
- [Reducing Urine-Marking Behavior in Dogs and Cats](#)

This information provided for you by

## Location Preferences

Your cat may have a location preference if:

- She always eliminates in quiet, protected places, such as under a desk, beneath a staircase, or in a closet.
- She eliminates in an area where the litter box was previously kept or where there are urine odors.
- She eliminates on a different level of the home from where the litter box is located.

## What You Can Do

Put at least one litter box on every level of your home. (Remember, a properly cleaned litter box does not smell.)

To make the area where she has been eliminating less appealing to your cat, cover the area with an upside-down carpet runner or aluminum foil, place citrus-scented cotton balls over the area, or place water bowls in the area (because cats often don't like to eliminate near where they eat or drink) or put a litter box in the location where your cat has been eliminating. When she has consistently used this box for at least one month, you may gradually move it to a more convenient location at the rate of an inch—seriously!—per day.

## Everyone Makes Mistakes

If you catch your cat in the act of eliminating outside the litter box, do something to interrupt her like making a startling noise, but be careful not to scare her. Immediately take her to the litter box and set her on the floor nearby. If she wanders over to the litter box, wait and praise her after she eliminates in the box. If she takes off in another direction, she may want privacy, so watch from afar until she goes back to the litter box and eliminates, then praise her when she does.

Don't ever punish your cat for eliminating outside of the litter box. By the time you find the soiled area, it's too late to administer a correction. Do nothing but clean it up. Rubbing your cat's nose in it, taking her to the spot and scolding her, or inflicting any other type of punishment will only make her afraid of you or afraid to eliminate in your presence. Animals don't understand punishment after the fact, even if it's only seconds later, and trying to punish them will often make matters worse.

## Other Types of House Soiling Problems

**Marking/Spraying:** To determine if your cat is marking or spraying, consult a veterinarian or animal behaviorist.

**Fears or Phobias:** When animals become frightened, they may lose control of their bladders or bowels. If your cat is afraid of loud noises, strangers, or other animals, she may soil the home when she is exposed to these stimuli.

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## By Tooth and Nail: Feline Household Destruction

Many people choose cats because they think they are an easy pet to live with, one that does not require obedience training like a dog does. While they may not need to learn to come when called or heel at your side, by tooth and nail, untrained cats can cause tremendous household destruction. Destruction by tooth would include noshing on houseplants and eating inappropriate materials such as dirt, leather, and wool — a habit referred to as pica. Destruction by nail refers to those old feline classics, using the furniture as a scratching post and the curtains as a jungle gym.

Feline destruction can be resolved in a number of ways: by managing the problem, by distracting the cat away from the objects of desire, and/or by retraining the cat. A combination of these three can solve almost any problem.



Houseplants often fall victim to young cats. For the cat that loves to eat plants, the problem can be managed by turning tabletop plants into hanging plants or by putting them in one room that is kept off-limits to felines. (Giving your plants away and learning to love plastic and silk flowers is another possibility.)

Another option is to distract the cat by making the houseplants harder to reach, meanwhile growing flats of catnip and wheat grass in a more easily accessible area. Praise and reward interest in the appropriate "cat plants." This should satisfy the cat's craving for fresh vegetation. And if that doesn't do it, add some string beans or fruit to the cat's dinner bowl.

Or you can attempt to retrain the cat by spraying the leaves of plants with an anti-chew agent especially formulated for plants and attaching balloons or double-stick tape to the planters. Cats avoid sites of loud noises (popped balloons) or surfaces that feel tacky to their touch.

In cases that involve pica, the cat should first be examined by a veterinarian to make sure it is not suffering from any sort of physical problem or metabolic imbalance.

For the cat that eats/chews inappropriate objects, managing the problem would take the form of keeping objects that the cat is attracted to in drawers, closets, and other closed containers.

Distract the cat from desired objects by providing plenty of playthings. Some experts feel that chewing inappropriate items is a sign of boredom and isolation. Increasing the cat's exercise sessions and rotating toys might bring about a welcome change.

Introduction of a second cat as a playmate might also alleviate the problem but should only be considered if the owner truly desires a second cat. Adding cats to a household is stressful at first to the existing occupant and numerous misbehaviors may result such as fighting or inappropriate litterbox habits. Stress-related health disorders such as Feline Lower Urinary Tract Disease can also occur.

Attempt to retrain the cat through dietary measures. Put the cat on a premium quality dry food with a adequate fiber in it. Feed only that food and no other supplements or treats and keep the cat away from his former pseudofood items for at least two weeks. After two weeks, douse the desired object with an anti-chew spray and reintroduce it to your cat.

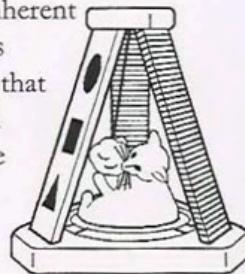
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To deal with the Number One destruction complaint — scratching the furniture, manage the problem by making sure furniture and drapery materials are tactfully unattractive to cats. Generally most smooth cotton fabrics such as chintz or silky fabrics such as parachute cloth hold little interest for cats. Their preferences run to the rough, bumpy, textured surfaces like Haitian cloth, Herculon, raw silk, and leather. If the furniture pre-dates the cat, use of heavy canvas slip covers or a comforter as a furniture protector should be considered. Of course, there are always plastic slipcovers for the truly desperate! Trimming the cat's nails every two weeks will keep them blunt and minimize the damage done by any errant scratching.

Distract the cat from furniture by providing a suitable scratching post. Cats have an inherent need to scratch in order to remove the dead nail sheaths from around their claws, thus allowing the new nails to grow out. Provide a sturdy, wide-based, rough textured post that is at least three feet tall. The post should be covered in sisal, burlap, or a similar rough fabric. A natural tree trunk that has been debugged is also acceptable. Keep it near the cat's favorite napping place or by a window, for the urge to scratch is often strongest upon awakening.



Scratching is also a territorial marking behavior. Cats often choose to mark an item that is prominent in the territory such as the corner of the sofa or wall. It is marked as a visual sign post, plus cats have a scent glands in their feet which are also used to mark items with their scent. (This is why even declawed cats will "scratch" and mark items.) Therefore it is important to initially place an appropriate scratching post beside or in front of the items the cat usually scratches, then move it slowly to the place where you would prefer it to be. Retrain the cat away from scratching on furniture by making favorite scratching pieces undesirable by covering them with double-stick tape, balloons, tin foil, or contact paper (sticky side out).

The sound of human nails run over the scratching post often entices the cat to the post. Praise the cat if that occurs. Dragging a ribbon or other interactive toy over or around the post also attracts the cat in the right direction. Several times a month, sprinkle some potent catnip on the post to increase its desirability if your cat responds positively to this herb.

By providing for a cat's physical and mental needs and keeping its environment stimulating through the use of kitty greens, appropriate scratching posts and challenging interactive toys; much of the destruction caused by tooth and nail can be avoided.

Jacque Lynn Schultz  
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## Cat Allergies: Top 10 Ways to Decrease Your Allergies to Cats!

Although cat allergy symptoms may never go away completely, they are manageable.

Remember this basic fact about cat allergens. They need to be airborne and you need to breathe them in for you to have an allergic reaction to them. Cat allergen is very small so it remains suspended in the air longer. There is also a high rate of re-contamination (because the cats are running around the house). Here are some recommended steps to decrease your (or your partner's) cat allergies.

1. **No more cats sleeping on the bed.** Sorry, this is a small price to pay for allergy relief. If you get your symptoms under control by all means invite them back, but give yourself a break while you are trying to abate your symptoms.
2. **Keep them out of the bedroom altogether.** Close the bedroom door to try and keep the cat allergen down in the bedroom. Your bedroom should be a sanctuary from allergens. So tempt your cats to sleep elsewhere during the day.
3. **Wash all bedding in 140-degree hot water at least twice monthly.** This eliminates both dust mite and cat allergen (because we know some of you will still let them sneak up on the bed every now and then).
4. **Use HEPA air filters in rooms where your cats frequent.** Since cat allergen is so difficult to remove, a good HEPA (high efficiency particulate air) air purifier is essential for cleaning the air in your home. HEPA air purifiers do require continued filter replacement, but when push comes to shove and you are in need of allergy relief, a good HEPA filter will do it for you.
5. **Vacuum up cat allergen with a high grade HEPA vacuum cleaner twice weekly.** Vacuum walls, carpet, flooring, chairs, and furniture...everywhere. Use the hand tools on the vacuum. Cat allergen particles are very small and invasive so you really have to do a thorough job. Good hand tools on your vacuum cleaner are the answer here. Also, installing a central vacuum will help pick up the rest.
6. **Use a vapor steam cleaner to clean your home.** In addition to vacuuming, vapor steam cleaners are now proven by research to be extremely helpful in killing off the cat proteins/dander, which are embedded in your carpets and upholstery. Steam cleaners provide a chemical-free way of cleaning and killing dust mites, bacteria, mold spores and cat allergen.
7. **Wash your hands immediately after petting your cat and do not rub your eyes.** Rubbing your eyes can result in itchy eyes for hours. Use a strong anti-bacterial soap to avoid this problem.
8. **Clean your cat.** Some people wash their cats to reduce the amount of cat allergen that is released from their cat into the air, but research seems to be conflicting about its effectiveness. Allerpet, a well-known brand of liquid that reduces cat allergen in the air, can be applied to your cats' coat and is available from your local veterinarian. Alternatively, you can get a micro fiber cloth and just damp rub down the cats' coats to rid it of visible dander. The majority of cats would prefer this to the highly dreaded bath.
9. **Confine your cats to one area of the house.** I know this will be difficult for some people but this at least controls the cat allergens to a separate place where you can concentrate your air purifier and cleaning efforts.
10. **You might now have to get rid of your cat!** If you do a good job with step numbers 1-9, your cat allergies should be significantly decreased. Keeping a cat when you have allergies takes a concerted effort, and is only for those who are nutty enough about their cats (like us), to go to all this trouble.

Mercia Tapping is the president of [allergybuyersclub.com](http://allergybuyersclub.com) and a true cat lover who has learned to control her cat allergies with the steps mentioned above. There is a Cat Solution Buyers Guide on her web site that recommends the best rated products for reducing cat allergens. Cats Guide Disclaimer: Before starting this program or any other self help program for reducing your allergic response to cats, check with your own allergist. You may wish to show him or her this article first, then follow your medical professional's instructions.

SOURCE: <http://cats.about.com/od/allergiesandcats/a/allergictocat.htm>

# How to Trim a Cat's Claws

**T**rimming a cat's claws every few weeks is a vital part of maintaining the animal's hygiene. Regular trimming not only protects the health of a cat's caretakers, but also guarantees the well-being of their couches and arm-chairs. But if the idea of trimming a cat's claws has you biting your nails, know that all it takes is some patience and a bit of practice to sharpen your skills.



## 1: Stay On the Cutting Edge

There are plenty of tools available to trim a cat's claws; use whichever one works best for you and the animal. Some people prefer a special pair of scissors modified to hold a cat's claw in place, others prefer human nail clippers, and still others choose plier-like clippers or those with a sliding "guillotine" blade. Whatever your tool of choice, be sure the blade remains sharp; the blunt pressure from dull blades may hurt an animal and cause a nail to split or bleed.

## 2: Take Paws, Part I

If you approach a cat with a sharp object in one hand while trying to grab a paw with the other, odds are you'll come up empty-handed. Because cats' temperaments and dispositions vary greatly, there is no "perfect" way to handle a cat while trimming his claws. Some cats do well with no restraint at all, but most cats need to be held firmly but gently to make sure that no one gets hurt. Try resting the cat in the crook of one arm while holding one paw with the other hand. Or, place the animal on a table and lift one paw at a time. You may even be able to convince a particularly sociable cat to lay back in your lap.





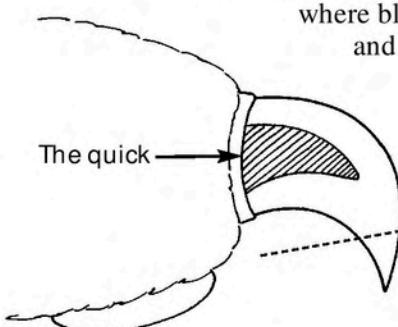
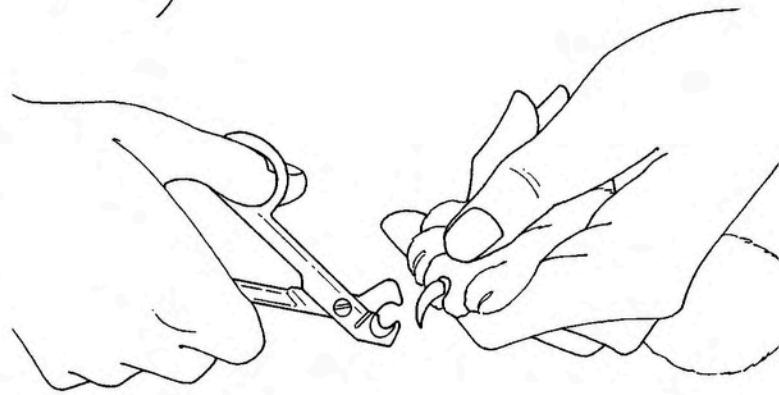
### 3: Take Paws, Part II

If you've got a helper, ask him to hold the cat while you clip the nails, or just ask him to rub the cat's nose or offer up a special treat.

### 4: Take a Little Off the Top

Now that you're in position and the cat's in position, too. Take a paw in your hand, curl your fingers into a fist, and use your thumb to gently press down on the joint just above the claw. When the claw extends, quickly but carefully snip off the sharp tip and no more.

Don't get too close to the pink part of the nail called "the quick," where blood vessels and nerve



endings lie. Just like the pink part of a human fingernail, the quick is very sensitive; cutting into this area will likely hurt the animal and cause bleeding. If this happens, apply a little pressure to the very tip of the claw (without squeezing the entire paw, which would only increase the blood flow) or dip the claw in a bit of styptic powder, then leave the cat alone, being sure to check on him occasionally.

*Note: When working with a long-haired cat, be sure the fur is clear of the clippers or you may pull the animal's fur, hurting the cat and hurting your chances of ever trimming his nails again.*

### 5: Take it One at a Time

If you aren't able to trim all 20 nails at once, don't worry. Few cats remain patient for more than a few minutes, so take what you can get, praise the animal for cooperating, then be on the lookout for the next opportunity—maybe even a catnap—to cut things down to size.