



## **Community Animal Rescue Effort**

A Unique Shelter Matching Pets With People Since 1987

### **Congratulations on adding a new member to your household!**

We hope that your cat will bring you years of joy and we've included some information in this packet that should help you along toward this goal.

You will receive your new friend's health records with information on vaccination dates and any treatments or procedures the cat had during its stay at C.A.R.E. You will want to have this with you at the cat's first visit with your own vet. We recommend establishing a relationship between you, your cat, and your vet at your earliest convenience.

In the event you do not have a regular vet, we've provided you with information on how to choose a vet. You'll also find information about local emergency animal centers, information on handling common (though not always appreciated) feline behaviors, basic tips on cat C.A.R.E. and a list of resources should anything arise that we don't cover in your adoption packet.

Please understand that while bringing this cat into your home is a wonderful thing, it can still be a stressful change for your kitty. We strongly urge you to give your cat a few days to adapt to all these changes. Keep him or her in a small room, even a bathroom, for a couple of days so your kitty can get used to life outside a cage, and get to know you. This step is even more critical if you have adopted an especially shy cat. Spend several 20 minute to one-half hour sessions with your new cat. Use this time to let your kitty know that you are the source of all things good...food, petting, and play. Gradually introduce your cat to the rest of your home. If you move too fast, you might find that your cat will hide a lot, perhaps only coming out while you're asleep to check you out.

Don't be alarmed if kitty doesn't eat a lot for the first day or so. Sometimes cats develop little stress colds after moving into their new home. This is generally nothing to be alarmed about, but do make sure that the cat is eating and not overly congested. Call your adoption counselor and your vet if the cat does not eat for more than 2 days or seems lethargic.

Your adoption counselor will be calling you after a day or so to see how your kitty is adjusting to its new environment. Please do not hesitate to call your counselor or the C.A.R.E. voicemail (847-705-2653) in the meantime should you have any questions.

As you and your new cat adjust to each other, please keep in mind the adoption counselors and other feline volunteers at C.A.R.E. are happy to provide you additional information or resources throughout your cat's lifetime. For example, if you need help learning to trim your cat's nails, or need help trimming the nails, you can schedule a nail trim at C.A.R.E.

We look forward to a long and satisfying relationship with you...and for you and your cat. Please let us know how your cat is doing....we love receiving holiday cards and photos, and hearing stories about your cat in his or her new home!



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# Things Your Cat Wants You To Know

## Useful Websites

### Behavior

- Various topics: [http://www.aafponline.org/resources/practice\\_guidelines.htm](http://www.aafponline.org/resources/practice_guidelines.htm). American Association of Feline Practitioners.
- Various topics: <http://www.vet.cornell.edu/fhc/brochures/index.htm>. Cornell Feline Health Center.

### Declawing

- <http://stevedalepetworld.com/images/stories/declawing.pdf>

### Health

- Comprehensive articles and issues. <http://www.sheltermedicine.com/portal/infosheets.shtml#top3>. Univ. of CA, Davis
- Diabetes, Urinary Tract, Gastrointestinal, etc.: <http://www.vet.cornell.edu/fhc/brochures/index.htm>. Cornell Feline Health Center
- Nutrition and Feeding: <http://www.catinfo.org/>. Linda A. Pierson, DVM

### Infectious Diseases

- FIP (Feline Infectious Peritonitis): Go to "Library" at <http://www.winnfelinehealth.org/index.html>. Winn Feline Foundation.
- FIP, FIV (Feline Immunodeficiency Virus), FeLV (Feline Leukemia Virus): <http://www.vet.cornell.edu/fhc/brochures/index.htm>. Cornell Feline Health Center

### Kitten Care

- Comprehensive kitten care information. <http://www.catchannel.com/kittens/default.aspx>. Cat Channel

### Senior Care

- [http://www.aafponline.org/resources/practice\\_guidelines.htm](http://www.aafponline.org/resources/practice_guidelines.htm). American Association of Feline Practitioners
- <http://www.vet.cornell.edu/fhc/brochures/index.htm>. Cornell Feline Health Center

### Just Plain Fun...AND Informative

- Create a web page for your cat, chat groups, more links. <http://www.catster.com>
- Create a web page for your cat, blogs, more links. <http://www.catchannel.com>

## Important Phone Numbers

**C.A.R.E. Hotline**  
(847) 705-2653

**Poison Control Center—Animal**  
(888) 426-4435

\*A consultation fee may be applied to your credit card\*

**Avid Microchip**  
(800) 336-2843

## C.A.R.E. Adoption Counselor

**Name:**

**Phone:**

## Links to Links

- [www.catwellness.org/](http://www.catwellness.org/)
- [www.stevedalepetworld.com/images/stories/resourcelist.pdf](http://www.stevedalepetworld.com/images/stories/resourcelist.pdf)

## C.A.R.E. Website

[www.CAREnorthshore.org](http://www.CAREnorthshore.org)

- Fundraising activities
- Happy Tails
- Volunteer opportunities
- More links to helpful resources

## Why Kittens & Young Cats Should Be Adopted In Pairs

Credit and Thanks to **PAWS Chicago Adoption Program** for this article

Kittens are curious and crave constant stimulation. A single, bored kitten will often entertain itself by chewing on plants, climbing drapes, climbing furniture, unrolling toilet paper, exploring electrical cords and sockets, etc. This is not to say that kittens who live with other kittens won't also sometimes do these things, but if they have another kitten to tumble around and play with, it is less likely that they will need to entertain themselves with behaviors like these, which at the least are destructive and at the worst can be very dangerous.



Kittens tend to be very active at night. A single kitten is likely to keep the owner awake with constant jumping, pouncing and other hunting behavior directed at any portion of the owner's body, which moves under the bed linens. With a companion to play with after the owner has gone to bed, this behavior is minimized as the two will occupy each other by finding interesting shadows to chase and games to play until they finally tire and fall asleep too.

Kittens want and need interaction with others of their own kind for healthy social development. A kitten learns a lot in the first several months of life from its mother and littermates. Separating a kitten from its mother is often a necessity in order for it to be adopted, but taking it away from its littermates and isolating it can delay the kitten's development emotionally, socially and sometimes physically. Kittens that are able to remain with one of their littermates or a similarly aged companion, tend to be healthier and happier, and in the end, better socialized pets than those who are isolated from others of their kind at an early age.



Anyone who has observed kittens know they want to bite and wrestle with one another--this behavior is normal. You cannot prevent a kitten from doing what comes naturally anymore than you can force a two-year-old toddler to sit still. Though it is not acceptable for a kitten to bite and wrestle with its human companions, in the absence of having a littermate or companion its own age to play with, this is precisely what a single kitten will want to do. Even if you are willing to allow (and can tolerate) this behavior from your kitten when it is small, by the time the animal matures, you will end up with an adult cat who has developed very bad habits (for example, biting and scratching as "play").

Humans, even loving, caring humans, are not an adequate substitute for a cat in lieu of one of its own kind. Even if the owner is fortunate enough to be home quite a bit, the amount of attention a lone kitten will demand is likely to occupy all of the owner's waking hours at home. A pair of kittens will definitely still want to interact with the owner, but can keep each other occupied while the owner is doing such necessary tasks as working, paying bills, having telephone conversations, gardening, laundry, etc. Most cats, regardless of their age, are highly sociable and are truly happier living with other cat companions. This in turn makes them better pets, which results in happier owners.

Particularly if there is already an older cat in the household, a kitten should not be brought in as a lone companion. As mentioned above, a youngster has boundless energy, wants to play and run constantly, and requires very high amounts of interaction, all of which are likely to overwhelm and irritate an older cat in short order. Likewise, a kitten is apt to be frustrated that its companion does not have the same energy level as itself. At the very least, this can lead to two very unhappy cats. Worse-case scenario, behavior problems such as litter box avoidance or destructive scratching can occur if one or both cats act out their frustrations on their surroundings. Longer-term, it is almost certain that the two will never have a close, bonded relationship, even after the kitten matures, since their experiences with one another from the beginning of the relationship are likely to be negative. An older cat is better matched with someone of his or her own age, who has a similar temperament.



Adopting a single kitten or young cat is simply not a good idea. Trying to keep a single kitten occupied, stimulated, safe and happy while also going about the business of everyday life is much more of a challenge than it may seem upon first consideration.



## How To Cat-Proof Your Home



### Stuff

#### 🐾 **Protect Valuables**

Cats are curious. That's one of their main jobs – being curious. So you won't want to leave your Ming Dynasty antique vase sitting on the coffee table. Because about ten seconds into Kitty's first exploration of the house, she will spring up on the table and topple the Ming Dynasty. Vase, that is.

#### 🐾 **Breakables**

Put away any breakable treasures that are remotely accessible to your cat. Jumping up onto high places (like shelves and counters) is innate cat behavior; trying to stop it will be stressful for both you and kitty. Instead, put yourself into the mind of the cat, look around, and remove anything you value.

#### 🐾 **Other Destroyables**

Kittens will climb your furniture and drapes. Consider covering cloth furniture with a purchased cover, or even with a blanket or bedspread. Confine drapes to off-limit rooms.

### Poisonous Plants

Kittens and adult cats love to play with plants – the motion of leaves moving in a draft is irresistible. Unfortunately, part of their play involves biting and tasting – eating some plants can be fatal, so get rid of those, or hang them safely out of reach. For a comprehensive list of list of plants poisonous to pets, read the "Poisonous Plants" article in this series.

### The Garage

It's best just to make the garage off-limits to your cat. Too many poisonous/hazardous materials are stored there. Anti-freeze is the worst because pets are attracted by its taste. Clean up *all* spilled anti-freeze pronto.

### Other Hazards

#### 🐾 **Hanging blinds cords**

Kittens will love to bat around cords from hanging blinds, but can also get tangled up in them with disastrous consequences. The safest bet is to tie the cords up out of reach.

#### 🐾 **Electrical and phone cords**

Kittens' insatiable curiosity often leads them to one of the most dangerously tempting objects in the house: electric cords. Invest in a cord management system or tape the cords together and fasten them out of reach. Do the same with long phone cords.

#### 🐾 **Pest Poisons**

Remove any ant or roach traps from accessible areas.

#### 🐾 **Small Hazards**

Rubber bands, paper clips, thumb tacks, broken balloons, Christmas tree tinsel and other small articles are tempting play objects for cats, but pose a choking hazard. Put them away in containers, and leave the tinsel off the tree this year. Keep plastic bags and bags with small handles out of reach of your cat.



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### **The Safe Room**

Set aside a "safe room" for your new arrival. Put her food dish, water, litter box, toys, scratching post and bed in it. Give this room a thorough going over. Once kitty is comfortable in her new surroundings, it will be time to let her explore the rest of your happily cat-proofed home.

### *Welcome home, Kitty!*

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To view the complete collection of Shelter Sheets, visit [www.cats.about.com/library/nosearch/blss.htm](http://www.cats.about.com/library/nosearch/blss.htm)

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### A KITTEN-PROOF HOME

Kittens are curious creatures capable of jumping onto high surfaces or squeezing into the smallest of spaces. To protect your kitten in his/her new environment, and to safeguard your belongings, consider kitten proofing your house. It is easy - here's how:

#### **Kitchens/Bathrooms:**

- ❖ Use childproof latches to keep little paws from prying open cabinets.
- ❖ Keep medications, cleaners, chemicals, and laundry supplies on high shelves
- ❖ Keep trash cans covered or inside a latched cabinet
- ❖ Make sure the kitten hasn't jumped into the dryer before you turn it on
- ❖ Keep all foods out of reach (even if the food isn't harmful, the wrapper could be \*
- ❖ Store all plastic (grocery/store) bags out of reach for the kitten (they are covered with animal fats so kittens like to lick/suck on them or they can get the handle stuck on their head)

#### **Living/family room:**

- ❖ Place dangling wires from lamps, VCR's televisions, stereos, and phones out of reach
- ❖ Keep kids toys put away
- ❖ Put away knick-knacks until your kitten has the coordination not to knock them over
- ❖ Check all of the places where your vacuum cleaner doesn't fit, but your kitten does , for dangerous items, like string
- ❖ Move house plants-which can be poisonous – out of reach, including hanging plants that can be jumped onto from nearby surfaces
- ❖ Tie hanging blinds up and out of reach
- ❖ Remove all small hazards such as rubber bands, paper clips, thumb tacks, broken balloons which pose a choking hazard

#### **Bedrooms:**

- ❖ Keep laundry and shoes behind closed doors (drawstrings and buttons can cause major problems)
- ❖ Keep medications, lotions, or cosmetics off accessible surfaces (like the bedside table)
- ❖ Move electrical and phone wires out of reach of chewing





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At least 1 in 3 cat owners has allergies to their feline companion. For many pet lovers, the benefits of animal companionship outweigh the drawbacks of allergy symptoms.

Yet, despite that statistic, cats are the most popular pet in America. There are ways to co-exist with your fluffy allergen.

First, it is important to note that cat allergies are triggered by a protein in the cat's skin, saliva and urine and NOT by the hair itself. That said, cats do groom themselves several times during the day hence leaving tiny particles of this protein (called dander) on the fur. This becomes airborne when it dries, allowing it to be inhaled or stick to various surfaces in your home, including carpeting, furniture, walls and bedding. You may also find you are allergic to Siamese but not Persians, or orange tabbies but not black cats.

Be aware that kittens often do not cause allergic reactions until they become adults. You might want to consider an adult cat you do not react to rather than take a chance on a kitten only to find you are extremely sensitive to it when it grows up.

You should consult an allergist to determine if you are truly allergic to cats, and/or other allergens. Generally, people who are allergic to one thing are allergic to several. Common allergens are pollen, mold, grass, trees, and dust mites. Allergies often work in combination, so exposure to one allergen can intensify your reaction to another. You may want to consider medications, immunotherapy (allergy shots) or simple housekeeping practices to reduce your exposure.

### **Top Ten (OK, 11) Tips for Coping with Allergies to Cats (or anything else for that matter)**

1. Always have a "safe" room where you can retreat, generally your bedroom. Do not allow the cat in this room. Do NOT let the cat sleep on your bed!!! Keep an air purifier (ideally with a HEPA filter) in this room as well. Wash bedding in hot water (140° F) at least twice a month. This will also kill off dust mites (another big allergen).
2. Thoroughly clean your home to remove cat allergens from carpets, drapes, upholstered furniture, walls. Vacuum often using a filter with a high allergy containment rating. You might want to consider replacing carpeting with hardwood flooring.
3. Check with your veterinarian for products (such as Allerpet) to reduce dander. These can be wiped over the cat's fur. Or, try a micro fiber cloth. If your cat is agreeable, you can try bathing your cat weekly. Sometimes wiping the cat with a cloth moistened with distilled water will do the trick.
4. If possible, have someone who is non-allergic do the bathing/grooming. Restrict the grooming to an easy to clean room.
5. Consult an allergist to help determine the most effective form of allergy control/treatment. Find a doctor who understands your commitment to your cat.
6. Place allergen-impermeable covers on mattresses, box springs and pillows to prevent previously accumulated allergens from escaping and from allowing more allergens to be captured.
7. Medications (over-the-counter and prescription).
8. Allergy shots (immunotherapy).
9. Use air purifiers with HEPA (high-efficiency particulate air) filters to help trap allergens.
10. Ventilate the house frequently and keep furnaces, air ducts and air conditioner filters clean.
11. Wash your hands after handling the cat...and do not touch your eyes!!





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### Bringing Your New Cat Home

© The Humane Society of The United States ([www.hsus.org](http://www.hsus.org))

Congratulations! You are the proud new owner of a cat. No doubt you're looking forward to years of happy companionship. But what do you do now?

The first thing you should know about your new pet is that most cats hate to travel. After the ride home from the animal shelter, he will, most likely, not be in the mood for fun. For the trip home, confine your pet in a sturdy cat carrier. Don't leave him loose in your car where he might panic and cause an accident.

To make his transition to your household as comfortable as possible, select a quiet, closed-in area such as your bedroom or a small room away from the main foot traffic, and provide him with a litter box. Let your new pet become acquainted with that limited area for the first few days. Let him sniff all your belongings and investigate all the hiding places. Over a few days, slowly introduce him to the rest of your house, including the other pets and household members. It will take a little while, but he will eventually begin to feel at home.

Cats vary in terms of how demanding they are as pets, so let yours guide you to the level of attention he wants, whether it's your hand for petting or your lap for sitting. Provide him with the necessary creature comforts and give him the companionship he seeks, and he will be content.

The following is a mini-primer of cats' requirements for a happy life:

**Cleanliness.** Your new cat will prize a clean environment and a clean body. Cats are naturally fastidious and most will instinctively use a litter box; for some, you may need to place the cat in the box and make little scratching motions with their front paws so they get the idea. Many place such a premium on cleanliness that you should clean the box daily or several times a week. Cats also value privacy, so place the litter box in a convenient but secluded spot.



Most cats will spend hours grooming themselves, but even the most avid groomer can use a little help from time to time. Nail clipping and ear and teeth cleaning are tasks you can do to keep your cat well groomed. Even short-haired cats benefit from weekly brushing, a task that can be pleasurable for both of you.

**Security.** Provide your cat with safety and security. Always use a cat carrier when transporting your pet. Protect him by making certain that all windows are securely screened, and that the washer and dryer are kept closed and are inspected before each use. Get into the habit of ensuring that drawers, closets, and cupboards are uninhabited before you close them. And for your own security, put a collar and tag on your feline—there's always the chance he may slip outside by mistake, and you want to make sure he can be identified as your pet.





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**Health Care.** Animal shelters take in animals with widely varying backgrounds, some of whom have not been previously vaccinated. Despite the best efforts of shelter workers, viruses can spread and may occasionally go home with adopted animals. If you already have dogs or cats at home, make sure they are up-to-date on their shots—including feline leukemia—and in good general health before introducing your new cat.

Take your new cat to the veterinarian within a week after adoption. There, he will receive a health check and any needed vaccinations. If your cat has not been spayed or neutered, make that appointment! There are already far too many unwanted kittens and cats; do not let your new pet add to the problem. Most likely, the shelter will require that you have your pet spayed or neutered anyway. If you need more information about why it is important to spay or neuter your cat, read our online information on spaying and neutering.



**House Rules.** Provide your cat with some "basic training" to help him get along in your home. It's true that cats usually have their own ideas about how to do things. Even so, most cats can be taught to obey simple rules like not scratching the couch, eating plants, or jumping up on the kitchen counter. With repeated, gentle, and consistent training, your cat will learn.

Yelling at your cat never works. Instead, positively reward him and provide him with alternative choices. A good scratching post—coupled with the handy squirt gun filled with water—can save your couch, your chair, and your nerves. If you help your cat understand the rules and give him a satisfying outlet for his scratching impulses, there will be no need to have him declawed, an unnecessary operation no cat should endure.

**Room for Fun.** Finally, provide your cat with an interesting indoor environment. Cats love to play and will appreciate simple and inexpensive toys. Ping-Pong balls and paper bags can provide hours of fun. A comfortable perch by a window can become your cat's very own entertainment and relaxation center.

Toys are very important for cats. They not only fight boredom, they also give cats a chance to express their prey-chasing drives. If you're the one moving the toy while your cat chases after it, playtime can be a bonding experience for both of you.

**Enjoy Your Rewards.** Now that you've made certain all the basic provisions are attended to, you can relax and enjoy your new pet. It may take a couple of weeks for him to adjust to life with you. But before you know it, you'll be curled up on the couch together, watching TV like old pals, and you won't remember what life was like without him.





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### How To Introduce Your New Cat to Other Cats

**cats.About.com**  
The Human Internet™

#### **“Slowly” and “Patiently” are the Operative Words**

Although sometimes cats will get along swimmingly in just a couple of hours, you should not be surprised to have a battle on your hands if you try to introduce your new cat too quickly. The time you spend on this all-important process will be saved exponentially by not having to break up conflicts every day.



#### **The Steps to Take**

- 🐾 Set up a comfortable “safe room” for New Cat. Put her food, water, litter box (not near the food), scratching post, toys, and bed or other sleeping mat there.
- 🐾 Expect a great deal of “hissy-spitty” behavior from both cats. This is natural and normal; they are just starting to explore their “pecking order.”
- 🐾 Scent is very important for cats. Let each of them smell the other indirectly, by rubbing a towel on one and letting the other smell it. They will soon accept the scent as a normal part of the house.
- 🐾 Once or twice, switch roles. Put New Cat in the normal living quarters, and let your resident cat sniff out the new cat’s Safe Room.
- 🐾 After a day or so, let the two cats sniff each other through a baby-gate or through a barely-opened door. Gauge the rate at which they seem to be acclimating to each other.
- 🐾 When you think they’re ready, let them mingle under your supervision. Ignore hissing and growling, but you may have to intervene if a physical battle breaks out. Again, take this step slowly, depending on how quickly they get along. If they do seem to tolerate each other, even begrudgingly, praise both of them profusely.
- 🐾 Make their first activities together enjoyable ones so they will learn to associate pleasure with the presence of the other cat. Feeding (with their own separate dishes), playing, and petting. Keep up with the praise.
- 🐾 If things start going badly, separate them again, and then start where you left off. If one cat seems to consistently be the aggressor, give her some “time out,” then try again a little bit later.

The introduction can take from two hours to six months, so don’t be discouraged if your cats don’t seem to get along well at first. Often the case is that they will eventually be “best buddies.”

#### **Factors to Consider**

- 🐾 If you are thinking of getting a kitten to keep an older cat company, you might want to consider two kittens. They will be able to keep each other company while the older cat learns to love them.
- 🐾 If you already have more than one cat, use the “alpha cat” for preliminary introductions. Once he/she accepts the newcomer, the other resident cats will quickly fall in line.
- 🐾 Lots of snuggle-time and attention is indicated for all cats concerned during this period. Remember, the prime goal is to get them to associate pleasure with the presence of each other.
- 🐾 If possible, ask a friend to deliver the new cat to your home, in her cage. You can



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act nonchalant, as if it's no big deal, then later let your resident cat(s) think it's their idea to welcome the newcomer.

With patience and perseverance, you can turn what might appear at first as an "armed camp" into a haven of peace for your integrated feline family. Congratulations on giving another cat in need a permanent home!

To view more Shelter Sheets online, go to: <http://cats.about.com/library/nosearch/blss.htm>

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**cats.About.com**  
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### How To Introduce Your Dog to Your Cat

Dogs and cats can usually live together peacefully, although creating a harmonious “blended family” requires some planning, patience, and careful guidance on your part. In some cases your dog and cat will become best friends (see picture, above). Some dogs unfortunately will be too dangerous for your cat, and one of the most important points of this article is that you need to recognize when this is the case. This sheet specifically is about introducing a new dog to a resident cat; a separate (though similar) sheet will talk about introducing a new cat to a dog.



#### Before the Introduction

##### You will have better chance of success if:

- 🐕 Your dog is a puppy. A puppy who grows up with a cat is likely to see the cat as part of the pack.

##### You will have less chance of success if:

- 🐕 Your dog has an aggressive or predatory nature. An aggressive dog can seriously injure or kill a cat.
- 🐈 Your cat is a small kitten, or is declawed, handicapped, or elderly. A kitten can be injured by an overly playful dog. Declawed, older, or handicapped cats are less equipped to defend themselves.

##### Preparation steps – important!

- 👤 Get to know your dog and cat well. Be able to interpret their body language and sense their moods.
- 🐕 Your dog should be well-trained, and respond to commands to come, stay, and sit. 🐈 You should also know how to blend mild discipline and positive redirection to gently influence your cat’s behavior.

**Do not proceed with the introduction until you have completed the steps in this section.**

#### The Introduction

- 🐕 Beforehand, exercise your dog and feed him a nice meal; put him in a relaxed mood.
- 🐕 Put your dog on a short leash or in his crate. 🐈 Put your cat in her carrier if she’s a scaredy-cat by nature; otherwise let her walk around. Be armed with lots of treats for good behavior.
- 🐕 Let dog and cat check each other out at a distance. Pet and talk to your dog soothingly. It’s not time for dog to approach cat just yet. Give your dog and cat some treats and praise as rewards.
- 🐕 If your dog bolts toward your cat, correct him with the leash. If he shows any signs of excessive excitability, calm him. If this doesn’t do the trick, cut the visit short and try again later.
- 🐕 Repeat these short visits several times a day, gradually giving your dog more leash as appropriate.

**Do not move to the next phase until you have several consecutive days of incident-free visits in which both animals demonstrate to your satisfaction that they are comfortable with each other.**



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### **Proceed with Caution**

Once your dog and cat consistently get along during leashed visits, you're ready for the next step. Take your dog off the leash, and supervise the two closely. If you see problems, and they don't abate with a few simple voice commands, back up to the previous phase for a few days. Gradually make the no-leash sessions longer. Do *not* leave the cat and dog alone until you're sure they're both fully comfortable with each other and there will be no trouble. Make sure your cat has places she can jump to for safety. Make some private space in your home for each animal. Use cat doors or baby gates if practical, as well as gentle discipline and rewards to enforce the rules. Keep kitty's litter box and food bowl out of your dog's reach. Now relax and give these guys some hugs.

### **When it Doesn't Work Out**

Sometimes, despite your best efforts, it wasn't meant to be. Some dogs are simply too dangerous to be around cats (occasionally the reverse is true). If your gut is telling you that this isn't working out, respect that message. The humane thing to do in this case is contact the shelter or breeder so that you can find a good cat-free home for the dog. In the interim, keep dog and cat separated and give them both lots of love.

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To view more Shelter Sheets online, go to: <http://cats.about.com/library/nosearch/blss.htm>

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# Cat Food Recommendations

### Mother Nature Knows Best

Cats thrive on a diet that resembles their natural diet; one rich in meat-based protein, with a high moisture content, moderate amounts of fat and little or no carbohydrates.



Cats evolved from a desert-dwelling animal where small prey was abundant; vegetation and water were sparse. As a result, a cat's digestive system became very efficient at converting fat and protein into energy, but has difficulty processing carbohydrates. In addition, cats are designed to obtain most of their water through their prey which typically consists of 75% water.

### Good Health is Related to Diet

There is a strong and logical connection between the food cats eat and their long-term health. Two common reasons for chronic feline health problems are diets too high in carbohydrates and too low in moisture.



#### Minimize Carbohydrates:

Dry foods may contain as much as 50% carbohydrates. Since cat's cannot efficiently process carbohydrates, they are stored as fat. This leads to obesity. The effects of obesity are:

- \* Heart disease because of the increased workload on the heart.
- \* Orthopedic problems are increased because of increased physical stress on the frame, leading to arthritis and early debilitation.
- \* Diabetes, a condition in which the pancreas doesn't produce the amount of insulin that it should to help metabolize blood sugar.
- \* Several liver disorders occur more frequently in overweight cats.

**Need Moisture From Food:** WATER is vital to your cat's health. Dry foods only contain 10 percent water whereas canned foods contain approximately 78 percent water. A cat whose diet consists of mostly dry food will drink more water than a cat eating canned food, but in the end, when water from all sources is added together (what's in their diet plus what they drink), the cat on dry food consumes approximately **half** the amount of water compared with a cat eating canned foods. Since cats do not have a strong thirst drive compared to other mammals, it is critical that they get plenty of moisture **from** their food. This is crucial when one considers the effects of chronic dehydration and how common kidney and bladder problems are in today's cat.

### What to Look For in Cat Food

**Wet/Canned Food:** The key in choosing a good type of food is to read the ingredients. Avoid meat by-products. The more meat ingredients in the first few positions, the better the food.

Here's a good example of an ingredient list from a high quality canned food: Turkey, chicken, liver, chicken, chicken broth...

Here's one from a low quality product: Meat by-products, ocean fish, water, poultry by-products, fish broth...

Canned/wet food is often considered better for cats because it is closer to what they would eat in the wild than dry food. Wet food has higher levels of protein and moisture, and lower levels of carbohydrates. Where wet food keeps your cat hydrated, dry food dehydrates your cat. Many vets now recommend always feeding wet food.

**Dry Food:** Again, the key to choosing a good quality food is to look for high quality protein ingredients as







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the first few ingredients listed on the label. If the first ingredient is meat, turkey or chicken the label should say so.

Avoid foods with by-products listed in the first few ingredients. A “by-product” (unrendered parts of an animal left over after slaughter) can include heads, feet, intestines, feathers, and egg shells.

Avoid foods that list grain—like corn, corn gluten meal, or rice—as any of the first few ingredients. The main ingredient in a cat’s diet should not be grain.

Here’s an example of the ingredient list taken from the label of a high quality dry food:

*Turkey, chicken, chicken meal, herring meal ...*  
versus a low quality food product: *Ground yellow corn, corn gluten meal, chicken by-product meal, meat and bone meal...*

**Avoid Fish Varieties:** In general, the small amounts of “fish meal” used as a flavoring and/or source of omega-3 fatty acids in cat foods are not a problem, but food with fish as a main ingredient should not be a mainstay of



any cat’s diet. It should be limited to an occasional—and small—treat. Why?

- \* Fish is one of the top 3 food allergens.
- \* There is a known link between feeding fish-type canned cat foods and the development of hyperthyroidism in older cats.
- \* Fish varieties have increased ash and magnesium content that can cause urinary tract infections and blockages.
- \* Fish may not be safe to feed to cats. Predatory fish at the top of the food chain, such as tuna and salmon, may contain very elevated levels of heavy metals (including mercury) as well as PCBs, pesticides, and other toxins.

### Keeping Kitty's Teeth Clean

Some people believe that dry food helps keep a cat’s teeth clean of tarter build up. Most dry foods are hard but brittle so that the kibble shatters without much resistance; there is little or no abrasive effect from chewing. The best way to keep your cat’s teeth clean and tarter free is to brush them regularly.





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## Where to Find Quality Foods

You will find most premium quality cat foods at pet specialty stores not at the supermarket. Relying on supermarket brands of cat food is analogous to feeding your children fast food for every meal. These foods may be fine for an occasional treat but should not be fed every day.

Preiser Animal Hospital Pet Store	2975 Milwaukee, Northbrook	(847) 827-5200
Evanger (manufacturer)	221 Wheeling Road, Wheeling	(847) 537-0102
Pet Supply Plus locations	1634 Deerfield Rd, Highland Park 7220 W. Foster Rd. Chicago 1748 N. Harlem Ave., Elmwood Park 1168 Lee St., Des Plaines 7172 Dempster, Morton Grove 3640 N. Elston, Chicago 270 W. North Ave., Villa Park 67-71 West Golf Rd, Arlington Hts 1206 W. Dundee, Buffalo Grove 915 E. Roosevelt, Wheaton 15 W. Ogden Ave., Westmont	
Chalet Nursery & Garden Shop	3132 Lake Ave Wilmette	(847) 920-2800
Noah's Ark Pet Supply	831 Elm St, Winnetka	(847) 784-0125
City of Perrrect Pets	630 Busse Hwy, Park Ridge	(847) 698-0140
Barrington Barkery	110 Barrington Commons Court, Barrington	(847) 381-3420
Trader Joes Food Stores		
Kiss my K-Nine	1640 Orrington Av, Evanston	(847) 424-0517

## Sources and Recommended links

- [catnutrition.org](http://catnutrition.org)
- [maxshouse.com/feline\\_nutrition.htm](http://maxshouse.com/feline_nutrition.htm)
- [catinfo.org](http://catinfo.org)
- [felinediabetes.com/hodgkinsarticle.htm](http://felinediabetes.com/hodgkinsarticle.htm)
- [littlebigcat.com](http://littlebigcat.com)

Check out the excellent videos on how to: pill your cat, brush their teeth, & trim their nails at [www.felinevideos.vet.cornell.edu](http://www.felinevideos.vet.cornell.edu)

Author: Lori Festenstein, Heartland Animal Shelter, January 2007



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## Quality Cat Foods – Ingredients List

PREMIUM FOOD	Can	Dry	INGREDIENTS ( <i>First Ingredients - poultry or main variety</i> )
Wellness		■	Deboned Chicken, Chicken Meal, Chicken Liver, Ground Brown Rice, Ground Whole Oats, Canola Oil (preserved with mixed
	■		Turkey, Chicken Liver, Chicken, Chicken Broth, Sweet Potatoes, Carrots, Natural Chicken Flavor, Guar Gum, Carrageenan,
Natural Balance		■	Chicken Meal, Chicken, Brown Rice, Duck Meal, Barley, Oatmeal, Chicken Fat (Preserved With Mixed Tocopherols), Potatoes,
	■		Turkey, Turkey Broth, Chicken Liver, Poultry Giblets, Carrots, Brown Rice Flour, Fish Meal, Lecithin, Dried Cranberries,
Felidae		■	Chicken Meal, Turkey Meal, Brown Rice, Lamb Meal, Chicken Fat, (Preserved with mixed Tocopherols), Herring Meal, Eggs,
	■		Chicken, Turkey, Chicken Broth, Chicken Liver, Herring (Source of Omega 3), Lamb, Brown Rice, Eggs, Sun Cured Alfalfa
Nature's Variety Prairie		■	Chicken Meal, Brown Rice, Oatmeal, Chicken Fat (preserved with Mixed Tocopherols and Citric Acid), Menhaden Fish Meal
	■		Chicken, Turkey, Chicken Broth, Chicken Liver, Carrots, Peas, Tricalcium Phosphate, Lecithin, Calcium Carbonate, Egg
California Natural		■	Chicken, Chicken Meal, Ground Brown Rice, Chicken Fat, Sunflower Oil, Flaxseed, Natural Flavors, Taurine,
	■		Chicken, Chicken Broth, Herring, Egg, Ground Brown Rice, Sunflower Oil, Flaxseed, Guar Gum, Taurine, Vitamins/Minerals
Innova Evo		■	Turkey, Chicken, Chicken Meal, Herring Meal, Potato, Chicken Fat, Eggs, Turkey Meal, Natural Flavors, Apples, Carrots,
	■		Turkey, Chicken, Turkey Broth, Chicken Broth, Chicken Meal, Herring, Carrots, Whole Eggs, Salmon Meal, Natural Flavors,
Merrick		■	n/a
	■		Chicken, Chicken Broth, Turkey Liver, Fresh Red Jacket New Potatoes, Fresh Carrots, Fresh Snow Peas, Fresh Apples, Potato
Eagle Pack	■		Turkey, Turkey Broth, Chicken, Chicken Liver, Barley, Dried Egg Product, Carrots, Peas, Potatoes, Guar Gum, Brewers Dried
Innova		■	Turkey, Chicken Meal, Chicken, Potatoes, Egg, Ground Barley, Chicken Fat, Rice, Herring, Sunflower oil, Apples, Carrots, Whole Pasteurized Milk, Fish Oil, Taurine, Alfalfa Sprouts, Vitamins/Minerals
	■		Turkey, chicken, Chicken Broth, Whole Eggs, Chicken Meal, Herring, Potatoes, Carrots, Brown Rice, Natural Flavors, Applies,
Newman's Own		■	Organic Chicken, Chicken Meal, Organic Rice, Organic Milo, Organic Barley, Organic Oats, Organic Ground Flax Seed, Fish
	■		Organic Chicken, Sufficient Water for Processing, Ocean Whitefish, Brown Rice, Flaxseed, Oat Bran, Guar Gum, Dried Kelp,
Evolve		■	Chicken, Chicken Meal, Brown Rice, Brewers Rice, Chicken Fat (preserved with mixed tocopherols, citric acid, and rosemary
	■		Turkey, Turkey Broth, Turkey Liver, Chicken, Ocean Fish, Brown Rice, Carrots, Cranberries, Cottage Cheese, Peas, Egg,
Pinnacle	■		Chicken, Chicken Broth, Chicken Giblets, Tuna, Mackerel, Turkey, Kidney, Oat Bran, Quinoa Seed, Egg Product, Guar Gum
Nutro Natural Choice	■		Chicken Broth, Chicken, Chicken Liver, Cod, Turkey, Ground Rice, Herring Meal, Oat Fiber, Lamb, Flaxseed Meal, Dried Beet
Nutro Max Cat & Gourmet Classics	■		Turkey Broth, Turkey, Chicken, Chicken Liver, Wheat Gluten, Rice Flour, Dried Egg Product, Natural Flavor, Food Starch, Salt,
Precise	■		Turkey, Turkey Broth, Chicken Liver, Brown Rice, Oat Bran, Dried Egg Product, Lecithin, Brewers Dried Yeast, Guar Gum,



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### The No-No List

#### Do not feed your cat the following:



- Alcoholic beverages
  - Chocolate
  - Coffee
- Grapes & raisins
- Moldy or spoiled food
- Onions, garlic & chives
  - Poultry bones
  - Salt & salty foods
- Tomato leaves, stems & unripe fruit
  - Yeast dough



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### Oh those quirky, but not necessarily appreciated feline behaviors!

Cats are generally delightful pets, giving us endless joy with their presence. They can also be amazingly confusing animals, seemingly delighting in bewildering mere humans with all manner of behaviors. Below are some common behaviors you may encounter in the years you share with your feline friend, along with some ways to cope with or change them. Be sure to check with your vet if any change of behavior occurs suddenly as there could be a medical issue involved.

#### Aggressive Behavior:

##### Declawed cats biting:

Unfortunately, some declawed cats behave aggressively at times. It is possible they feel defenseless and resort to biting as a means of communication.

You may or may not be able to train your cat to bite less. She must feel as comfortable as possible - she's biting because she feels threatened. When working to retrain your cat to bite less, introduce something that makes her uncomfortable *ONLY* when she misbehaves. For example, at the exact moment she tries to bite, quickly mist her with a spray bottle (do not spray directly in her eyes), or shake a can that has a few coins in it or make another startling noise. Next, if she is biting when she interacts with you, and it is pleasurable for her (such as petting or playing), stop interacting with her immediately. These tactics will require a lot of patience and may never completely stop the biting behavior.



##### Petting Aggression (over stimulation):

Some experienced cat owners are familiar with this problem: you're petting Kitty, she seems to like it because she is purring and suddenly, CHOMP! Her teeth are firmly planted on your hand!

The consensus is that the cat is over stimulated during petting, and can't quite figure out how to tell you to stop. The best thing to do is DON'T PANIC. Slowly withdraw your hand and move away from the cat. If you are holding kitty at the time, pull your hands away and allow her to retreat, or stand up and let her jump to the floor.

Learn how to recognize signals that precede biting: wildly flicking tail, ears laid back, dilated pupils, or body tensing. When you notice any of these, stop touching kitty and allow her to move away on her own.

When training your kitty, start with short time periods of petting then slowly increase the length of time. Always back away slowly when the cat shows signs of frustration.

Then there are some cats that prefer other methods of human interaction besides petting; for those animals try playing with them more and petting them less.

##### Play Biting/Aggression:

It is best to understand kitty's behavior, before attempting to change it. Under-stimulation, an excess of unused energy, and lack of appropriate opportunities for play can also lead to undesirable behavior. This may be exhibited as overly rambunctious or aggressive play, which inadvertently may lead to injuries to people. In some cases, the play can include a number of components of the cat's predatory nature including the stalk, pounce, and bite. Although this type of play is usually more common in kittens, it may persist through adulthood.



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Cat play is simulated best with objects that can be stalked, chased, swatted, or pounced upon. Providing ample opportunities for self-play aids in reducing play with owners. In addition, before you consider using an interruption or punishment device (water sprayer, alarm, and compressed air), the cat should first receive a sufficient number of play alternatives. Anticipate your cat's need to play and initiate interactive play sessions. Play toward the owners (including ambushing and ankle biting), which is initiated by the cat, should never be tolerated. Successful interactive toys include wiggling ropes, wands, dangling toys, and toys that are thrown or rolled for the cat to chase. Toys that dangle on strings or ropes should only be used with human supervision to avoid circulation or nerve injuries – or worse, strangulation.

For self-play, provide your cat with toys such as ping-pong balls, walnuts in the shell, catnip-filled toys, battery-operated or spring-mounted toys, scratching posts, or toys within containers that deliver food or treats when scratched or manipulated. Hiding treats in various locations stimulates searching behavior that cats enjoy. Bird feeders outside of windows occupy some cats, while others might be interested in videos for cats. Cats with a strong desire for social play benefit from a second kitten to act as a playmate -- provided both are adequately socialized and properly introduced.

### Redirected (or misplaced) aggression:

One of the most difficult types of aggression for owners to understand is called "redirected aggression." In this form of aggression, a cat generally attacks the closest object, often a family member or a cat in the same household, when it is frightened or excessively aroused by a stimulus that is inaccessible. The most common stimuli leading to redirected aggression are the presence of another cat, high-pitched noises, visitors in a house, a dog, an unusual odor, and being outdoors unexpectedly.

If your cat becomes agitated, first, avoid her until she calms down. If aggression is redirected toward another cat in the household, the two cats may have to be separated. With some cats, this separation may only need to last a few minutes, but with others, it may take hours. In rare cases, it may take several days or the cat may remain aggressive. This is most likely if the redirected aggression was met with retaliation, punishment or other form of fearful event (perhaps in an effort to separate the cat from the victim). If the attack leads to a change in relationship between the cat and the victim (fear, defensiveness) then the aggression may persist.



The best way to calm an agitated cat is to put her in a darkened room and leave her there. If she is too stimulated, leave the cat alone in the room. Picking up an angry cat can lead to bites and/or scratches to the guardian. Some cats may need to be kept in the room anywhere from several minutes to several days. The guardian can go in, turn on the light, offer food to the cat, and if she remains fearful or does not accept the food, the guardian should turn out the lights and leave. If the aggression has been directed toward another cat in the home it is very important to wait until the cats are calm before reintroducing them. The biggest mistake that guardians make in trying to resolve this problem is to try and bring the cats together too soon.

Aggression in cats can also be triggered by fear, pain, or territorial issues.

### The Stressed Kitty:

We often look at our cats with envy. After all, who else gets away sleeping 18 hours a day, with interruptions only for grooming, eating, playing and stretching, not to mention a little lovin' from their favorite human?

Despite their idyllic lifestyle, kitties can become stressed -- often by the simplest of things. Some cats are naturally very curious and look at change as chance to explore new things. Maybe you have moved the furniture around the living room or put in new carpeting. Perhaps you've moved the litter box from one end of the room to another. While some cats will find this



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exciting and fun, others find that you have totally disrupted their routine, and now you have a stressed cat on your hands. It's hard to predict what may trigger stress in your cat, but when it happens she has a variety of ways to let you know. Some may change their litter box habits; others develop illnesses such as upper respiratory or bladder infections. Still others may exhibit some of the aggressive behaviors listed above.

There are ways to reduce stress. Try to keep kitty's routine as normal as possible. Your work hours may have changed, but see if you can find a way to feed her at about the same time each day. Consider investing in an automatic feeder for this purpose.

If you are moving or redecorating, place kitty in one room with all of her favorite toys, food, water, and litter box during the upheaval. Be sure to spend lots of time playing with and petting her. If you are moving, leave some articles of your clothing with kitty -- something that smells familiar. Keep kitty confined in the new home as well, giving her time to adjust to the new smells and then slowly introduce her to the entire home. Use of a Feliway diffuser, or a spray mist of diluted lavender oil can also be calming to a cat.

Calm your stressed kitty by speaking softly in a slightly higher pitched voice. Stroke her gently on the forehead with one finger (mimicking the mother cat grooming her kitten). Say her name often and try to use as few words as possible with a "hiss" sound. Give her some treats to remind her that you are provider of good things!

When possible, make changes slowly to avoid stressing your kitty in the first place, especially if you have a shy or sensitive cat. Don't move all the furniture at once, maybe just a piece or two every couple of days. If you must move the litter box, move it slowly. You may find that your cat really does like it best where it is now and won't use it in a different location, especially if the location change is dramatic and done too fast.

### **The Alpha Female Cat**

Among spayed and neutered cats, there are some female felines that are dominant by nature -- these are the alpha females. In a multiple cat household, there is often a female at the top of the cat hierarchy (there is not always an alpha female although it is possible for a female to assume the role of alpha in a single cat household). This cat has a lot of responsibility -- it is her job to keep all of the other cats in line. She may not find much time play because of all this responsibility. She cannot change this; it's just her personality.

An alpha female must keep her place at the top of the hierarchy at all times. Sometimes it is necessary for her to howl, yell, hiss, and/or whack the other resident cats on the head for no apparent reason other than to remind them who is boss -- who is head of the cat family. It is very important that she get the first plate of food at eating time, as top cat she is entitled to eat first. Alpha female cats are happiest as the only cat in a household, or where other resident cats have mellow personalities. The majority are best suited to live with mellow males. Alpha females are also more likely to get over stimulated when petted.

Most experienced cat owners know to let the alpha female cat just be herself. After all, she's in charge of everything and that is a big responsibility.





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### Headbutts and Cheek Rubs

Don't we all just love when our feline pal awakens us in the middle of the night? Well, if your kitty uses a headbutt (officially known as "bunting") to wake you up, or headbutts you after you have opened your eyes...purrrrrhaps she wants you to know that she loves you. Well that and it might be nice if you got up and gave her some food.

Headbutting or bunting (not cheek or full body rubs) is one way kitty shows her affection toward us. Bunting is one form of greeting. Another is the long, slow blinks we get when our cat looks at us. Try blinking slowly at your cat and see if she blinks back. I bet she will!



## Your Cat: Indoors Or Out

If you want your cat to live a long and healthy life, keep her inside.

If you allow your cat to wander around on her own, without your supervision, she is susceptible to any of the following tragedies:

- • becoming hit by a car
- • ingesting a deadly poison like antifreeze or a pesticide
- • becoming trapped by an unhappy neighbor
- • being attacked by a roaming dog, cat or wild animal
- • contracting a disease from another animal
- • becoming lost and unable to find her way home
- • being stolen
- • encountering an adult or child with cruel intentions

Following are some of the reasons people have provided for allowing their cat to be outdoors without their supervision, along with our comments and suggestions.

### **“I have a six-foot fence.”**

Unless you have special fencing that’s designed to prevent a cat from climbing out, your cat will be able to scale your fence and escape the confines of your yard. Even if you do have special fencing, you need to make sure that it can keep other cats or animals from getting into your yard to get to your cat.

### **“My last cat went outdoors and he loved it.”**

Your cat may enjoy being outdoors, but by allowing him to go outside, unsupervised, you’re putting him at risk and shortening his life span. Most cats that are allowed to roam outdoors usually don’t live for more than a few years. Cats who live strictly indoors can live up to 18 - 20 years of age.

### **“My cat’s litter box smells.”**

Scoop your cat’s litter box on a daily basis. How often you change the litter depends on the number of cats in your home, the number of litter boxes, and the type of litter you use. Twice a week is a general guideline for clay litter, but depending on the circumstances, you may need to change it every other day or once a week. Wash the litter box with soap and water every time you change the litter. Don’t use strong smelling chemicals or cleaning products when washing the litter box, as it may cause your cat to avoid it.

### **“My cat likes to sun herself.”**

Your cat can sun herself by any window indoors. If you’re really set on letting your cat sun herself outdoors, put her on a harness and leash and stay with her while she’s taking in the rays.

### **“I can’t keep him in.”**

Keep your windows closed or put in screens. Remember to always keep your doors closed and teach your children the importance of keeping the doors closed, too. It may take a few days or a few weeks, but if there are enough interesting things for your cat to play with indoors, he’ll come to enjoy being indoors. Be sure to provide him with a scratching post and safe toys to bat or carry around (see our handout: “Cat Toys and How To Use Them”).

### **“We’ve always let her out.”**

You can change your cat’s behavior. It will take time and patience, but it might save her life. When you implement your “closed door” policy, give her a lot of extra attention and entertainment. At first she may cry, but don’t give in. Soon she’ll be happy to stay indoors with you.

### **“My cat knows to avoid cars.”**

Even if this were true, all it would take is another car, a dog or a shiny object to lure your cat into the street and into the path of traffic. Also keep in mind that some people may not swerve to miss a cat in the road.

### **“My cat needs exercise and likes to play with other cats.”**

Stray cats are likely to spread viruses like feline leukemia and other fatal diseases. If your cat needs a friend, adopt another cat that’s healthy and disease-free.

### **“My cat yowls and acts likes he really needs to go outside.”**

Your cat may be feeling the physiological need to mate. If this is the case, make sure your cat is neutered (males) or spayed (females). Sterilized cats don’t have the natural need to breed, and therefore, won’t be anxious to go out to find a mate.



## How To Prevent Litter Box Problems



Under normal conditions, your cat will like to use her litter box. Changes in your cat's litter box behavior can almost always be traced to a medical condition, stress, or something she dislikes about her litter box environment. Fortunately, a little know-how and preventive maintenance can greatly reduce the chance of litter box problems.

### But First...

- ❖ Never punish or yell at your cat for not using her litter box; that only makes things worse.
- ❖ Any acute or prolonged signs of litter box difficulties, such as urinating more frequently, avoiding the litter box, or **straining**, could indicate an **urgent** medical condition; call your vet right away.

### The Perfect Litter Box Environment

- ❖ **Location.** Put the litter box in a pleasant location: easy to access, away from noisy or high-traffic areas, out of the dog's and baby's reach. Some cats, especially older or handicapped cats, prefer a litter box on each floor of the house. Beware of putting the litter box directly on soft carpet; for some cats, the adjacent carpet feels like litter. Use a minimum of one litter box per cat.
- ❖ **Litter.** Every cat has a favorite litter – work with your cat to find out her preference. When in doubt, start with an unscented clumping litter. Although the jury's still out on this, if you have a kitten, you may want to avoid clumping litters that contain sodium bentonite. Keep kitty's box filled with about two inches of litter, unless directed otherwise by the package. When changing litters, do it gradually over several days, or fill a second box with the new litter.
- ❖ **Type of box.** Some cats don't care for covered litter boxes. If you use a covered box, remember to scoop and clean often, as odors can be trapped inside. Some cat owners like automatic-cleaning litter boxes, others don't. As with litter, your cat will help guide you in your selection.
- ❖ **Clean!** Scoop clumping litter at least once a day, other litters as directed. Wash the litter box and replace the litter weekly. Use a mild soap and rinse well. An occasional 1-part-in-10 bleach solution is fine if you rinse thoroughly. Stay away from ammonia and citrus-scented or strong-smelling cleaners.
- ❖ **Routine.** Once you and kitty find a system that you're both comfortable with, "stay the course."

### Minimize Stress

Play with your cat each day. Make sure she has some convenient scratching posts that she *uses*. Let her sleep undisturbed in a comfy place. Give her some nice views, fun cardboard boxes to explore, a cat tree (or reasonable facsimile) to climb, and a small family of partially hidden catnip mice to discover – accommodate her natural curiosity *safely*. Strive for a harmonious household. Tell your cat what a great kitty she is, and give her affection each day – but don't invade her space when she prefers to be left alone.



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Cats derive comfort from a predictable routine; if major changes such as a move or a new baby are inevitable, gently and gradually acclimate kitty, and maintain her routine as much as possible.

### Monitor Kitty's Litter Box Habits

Get to know your cat's eating, drinking, and bathroom habits, and be alert to any changes. When you scoop, do a onceover on the litter box contents. Occasionally watch kitty in the act, as long as you don't bother her. The urine amount emptied should be more than tiny; stools should be brown, not immediately hard, and not runny. Your cat should seem comfortable when using her litter box and digging in the litter. There is some room for natural variation in these behaviors – when in doubt, call your vet.

### Special Cases

- 🐾 **Kittens** should be introduced to the litter box early. If your kitten goes outside the box, wipe up the waste with a paper towel, put the towel in the box, and help kitty cover up – she'll catch on.
- 🐾 **Declawed cats** might be more reluctant to dig in the litter, and may require a lighter litter.
- 🐾 **Older, handicapped, and injured cats** will appreciate more and shallower litter boxes.

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To view the complete collection of Shelter Sheets, visit [www.cats.about.com/library/nosearch/blss.htm](http://www.cats.about.com/library/nosearch/blss.htm)

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### MEDICAL CARE FOR YOUR NEWLY ADOPTED CAT

Regular professional veterinary care is essential to the health of your cat. Preventive veterinary care can add years and quality to the life of your cat. Consider yourself, your cat, and your veterinarian and staff a team whose main goal is to keep your cat happy, healthy, and in a loving relationship with you for as long as possible.

Selecting a veterinarian is a personal decision. The best way to find a good veterinarian is to ask people who have the same approach to pet care as you. Start with a recommendation from a friend, neighbor, co-worker, family member, dog trainer, groomer, boarding kennel employee, or pet sitter.

Once you've narrowed your search, schedule a visit to meet the staff, tour the facility, and learn about the animal center's philosophy and policies. This is a reasonable request that any veterinarian should be glad to oblige. Write down your questions ahead of time.

Here are some of the things to consider when you make your initial visit.

- Is the facility clean, comfortable, and well-organized?
- Are appointments required?
- How many veterinarians are in the practice?
- Are there technicians or other professional staff members?
- Are dog and cat cages in separate areas?
- Is the staff caring, calm, competent, and courteous, and do they communicate effectively?
- Do the veterinarians have special interests such as geriatrics or behavior?
- Do fees fit your budget, and are discounts for senior citizens or multi-pet households available?
- Are x-rays, ultrasound, bloodwork, EKG, endoscopy, and other diagnostics done in-house or referred to a specialist?
- Which emergency services are available?
- Is location and parking convenient?

### Local Emergency Medical Care

Animal 911  
(847) 673-9110  
3735 W Dempster Skokie, IL 60076

Animal Emergency & Referral Center  
(847) 564-5775  
1810 Skokie Blvd Northbrook, IL 60062



# Community Animal Rescue Effort

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## Pre-Vet Examination History and Checklist

May be used for routine (well visits) or non-routine/urgent visits to your cat's veterinarian. This is not an all-inclusive list but is helpful in describing your kitty's general health or the beginning of problems or concerns to the vet.

Pet's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

	No	Mild	Moderate	Severe	When did problem begin?
1) Weight gain ___ Weight loss ___					
2) Appetite: Increase ___ Decrease ___					
3) Vomiting ___ Diarrhea ___					
4) Constipation/difficult defecation					
5) Increased drinking ___ Increased Urine ___					
6) Lumps/tumors ___ Skin Problems ___ Describe: _____					
7) Bad breath / Sore gums / Difficult chewing					
8) Decreased awareness – gets confused/lost					
9) Housesoiling ___ Spraying ___ Describe: _____					
10) Decreased recognition of people, animals or previously learned commands Describe: _____					
11) Decreased affection / interaction with owners					
12) Chewing, licking, eating non-food items Describe: _____					
13) Increased irritability / aggression					
14) Increased fear / anxiety					
15) Decreased tolerance of handling					
16) Decreased hearing or "selective hearing"					
17) Repetitive behaviors e.g. pacing, overgrooming Describe: _____					
18) Decreased grooming or self care					
19) Muscle tremors / shaking					
20) Weakness / incoordination					
21) Difficulty climbing stairs / increased stiffness					
22) Decreased activity – sleeps more					
23) Excessive vocalization: Day ___ Night ___					
24) Waking owners at night					
Other problems / concerns: _____					
Medications: _____					
Existing Medical problems: _____					





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**MONTHLY CHECKLIST FOR YOUR SENIOR FELINE**  
**Review list with your vet and ask when he/she should like to be contacted regarding noticed changes.**  
**Always contact your vet immediately if there are sudden changes.**

	Month 1	Month 2	Month 3	Month 4
<b>My cat:</b>	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No
1) is acting normal - active and in good spirits				
2) does not tire easily with moderate exercise				
3) does not have seizures or fainting episodes				
4) has a normal appetite, with no significant weight change				
5) has a normal thirst and drinks the usual amount (approx. 1 oz. per pound per day or less)				
6) does not vomit or regurgitate undigested food				
7) has normal appearing bowel movements (firm/formed with no blood or mucus)				
8) urinates in usual amounts and frequently, color is normal				
9) always uses the litter box and there is no offensive household pet odor				
10) has no offensive habits (biting, digging, chewing, scratching, spraying)				
11) has gums that are pink with no redness, swelling, or bleeding				
12) has clean, white teeth, free from plaque, tartar or bad breath				
13) has a moist nose, free from discharge or sneezing				
14) has eyes that are bright, clear and free of discharge				
15) doesn't drag its bottom or chew itself excessively				
16) has a full, glossy coat with no missing hair, no mats or excessive shedding				
17) doesn't scratch, lick, or chew itself excessively				
18) has skin that is free from dry flakes, thinning haircoat, is not greasy, and has no bad odor				
19) is free from fleas, ticks, lice or mites				
20) has a body that is free from lumps/bumps				
21) has ears that are clean and odor free				
22) doesn't shake its head or scratch its ears				
23) has normal hearing and reacts as usual to its environment				
24) walks without stiffness, pain or difficulty				
25) has healthy looking feet and short nails				
26) breathes normally, without straining or coughing				



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### Plants, Foods and Substances Dangerous To Your Pet

Pets are naturally inquisitive and will investigate things that are sometimes harmful to them. It is the responsibility of pet owners to create a safe environment for their furry counterparts. Below are three lists from the ASPCA ([www.asPCA.org](http://www.asPCA.org)) of plants, foods, and other common substances that are potentially toxic to pets, most specifically to cats and dogs.



Many of the plants in the following list are very common in households. Great care should be taken to keep these plants out of reach of your pets.

#### Ten Most Common Poisonous Plants

**Marijuana:** Ingestion of *Cannabis sativa* by companion animals can result in depression of the central nervous system and incoordination, as well as vomiting, diarrhea, drooling, increased heart rate, and even seizures and coma.

**Sago Palm:** All parts of *Cycas Revoluta* are poisonous, but the seeds or “nuts” contain the largest amount of toxin. The ingestion of just one or two seeds can result in very serious effects, which include vomiting, diarrhea, depression, seizures and liver failure.

**Lilies:** Members of the *Lilium spp.* are considered to be highly toxic to cats. While the poisonous component has not yet been identified, it is clear that with even ingestions of very small amounts of the plant, severe kidney damage could result.

**Tulip/Narcissus bulbs:** The bulb portions of *Tulipa/Narcissus spp.* contain toxins that can cause intense gastrointestinal irritation, drooling, loss of appetite, depression of the central nervous system, convulsions and cardiac abnormalities.

**Azalea/Rhododendron:** Members of the *Rhododendron spp.* contain substances known as grayantoxins, which can produce vomiting, drooling, diarrhea, weakness and depression of the central nervous system in animals. Severe azalea poisoning could ultimately lead to coma and death from cardiovascular collapse.

**Oleander:** All parts of *Nerium oleander* are considered to be toxic, as they contain cardiac glycosides that have the potential to cause serious effects—including gastrointestinal tract irritation, abnormal heart function, hypothermia and even death.

**Castor Bean:** The poisonous principle in *Ricinus communis* is ricin, a highly toxic protein that can produce severe abdominal pain, drooling, vomiting, diarrhea, excessive thirst, weakness and loss of appetite. Severe cases of poisoning can result in dehydration, muscle twitching, tremors, seizures, coma and death.

**Cyclamen:** *Cyclamen* species contain cyclamine, but the highest concentration of this toxic component is typically located in the root portion of the plant. If consumed, Cyclamen can produce significant gastrointestinal irritation, including intense vomiting. Fatalities have also been reported in some cases.

**Kalanchoe:** This plant contains components that can produce gastrointestinal irritation, as well as those that are toxic to the heart, and can seriously affect cardiac rhythm and rate.

**Yew:** *Taxus spp.* contains a toxic component known as taxine, which causes central nervous system effects such as trembling, in coordination, and difficulty breathing. It can also cause significant gastrointestinal irritation and cardiac failure, which can result in death. Poisonous Plants- Dogs and Cats



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### Toxic Plants Listed Alphabetically

This list contains plants that have been reported as having systemic effects on animals and/or intense effects on the gastrointestinal tract. Please note this list is not meant to be all-inclusive, but rather a compilation of the most frequently encountered plants.

- Aloe
- Amaryllis
- Andromeda Japonica
- Asian Lily (Liliaceae)
- Asparagus Fern
- Australian Nut
- Autumn Crocus
- Avocado
- Azalea
- Bird of Paradise
- American Bittersweet
- European Bittersweet
- Branching Ivy
- Buckeye
- Buddhist Pine
- Caladium
- Calla Lily
- Castor Bean
- Ceriman (aka Cutleaf Philodendron)
- Charming Dieffenbachia
- Chinaberry Tree
- Chinese Evergreen
- Christmas Rose
- Clematis
- Cordatum
- Corn Plant (aka Cornstalk Plant)
- Cutleaf Philodendron (aka Ceriman)
- Cycads
- Cyclamen
- Daffodil
- Day Lily
- Devil's Ivy
- Dumb Cane
- Deadly Nightshade (See Nightshade)
- Easter Lily
- Elephant Ears
- Emerald Feather (aka Emerald Fern)
- Emerald Fern (aka Emerald Feather)
- English Ivy
- Fiddle-Leaf Philodendron
- Flamingo Plant
- Florida Beauty
- Foxglove
- Fruit Salad Plant
- Glacier Ivy
- Gladiolas
- Glory Lily
- Gold Dieffenbachia
- Gold Dust Dracaena
- Golden Pothos
- Green Gold Nephthysis
- Hahn's self branching English Ivy
- Heartleaf Philodendron
- Heavenly Bamboo
- Holly
- Horsehead Philodendron
- Hurricane Plant
- Hyacinth
- Hydrangea
- Iris
- Japanese Show Lily
- Japanese Yew (aka Yew)
- Jerusalem Cherry
- Kalanchoe
- Lace Fern
- Lacy Tree
- Lily of the Valley
- Macadamia Nut
- Madagascar Dragon Tree
- Marble Queen
- Marijuana
- Mauna Loa Peace Lily (aka Peace Lily)
- Mexican Breadfruit
- Mistletoe "American"
- Morning Glory
- Mother-in-Law
- Narcissus
- Needlepoint Ivy
- Nephthytis
- Nightshade
- Oleander
- Onion
- Orange Day Lily
- Panda
- Peace Lily (aka Mauna Loa Peace Lily)
- Philodendron Pertusum
- Plumosa Fern
- Precatory Bean
- Queensland Nut
- Red Emerald
- Red Lily
- Red-Margined Dracaena (aka Straight-Margined Dracaena)
- Red Princess
- Rhododendron
- Ribbon Plant (Dracaena sanderiana)
- Rubrum Lily
- Saddle Leaf Philodendron
- Sago Palm
- Satin Pothos
- Schefflera Spotted Dumb Cane
- Stargazer Lily
- Striped Dracaena
- Sweetheart Ivy
- Swiss Cheese Plant
- Taro Vine
- Tiger Lily
- Tomato Plant
- Tree Philodendron
- Tropic Snow Dumbcane
- Tulip
- Variable Dieffenbachia
- Variegated Philodendron
- Warneckeii Dracaena
- Wood Lily
- Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow
- Yew (aka Japanese Yew)
- Yucca



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### Dangerous Foods For Your Pet

We often think of our pets not as an animal, but as a person. After all, they have personalities just like we do, likes and dislikes etc. And just as their human counter-parts, pets will often consume things that are not so good for them. Some people foods are not safe for your pet to eat. While we all probably know someone who has routinely fed their pet one or more of these unhealthy and possibly toxic foods with no apparent adverse affects, most vets agree that you should avoid feeding the following foods to your pet. Below are foods that you should avoid feeding your dog or cat.

- Alcoholic beverages
- Avocado
- Chocolate (all forms of chocolate)
- Coffee (all forms of coffee)
- Fatty foods
- Macadamia nuts
- Moldy or spoiled foods
- Onions, onion powder
- Raisins and grapes
- Salt
- Yeast or any raw bread dough
- Garlic
- Products sweetened with xylitol (used to sweeten some sugar-free candies and gum.)

### Other Dangerous Substances To Pets



A good rule of thumb for making your house safe for your pet is to poison-proof it just as you would for a small child. Dogs, cats, ferrets, rabbits, birds, and most other animals are curious by nature. They like to explore new areas and substances. For your pet's health, as well as the health of any children in the household, please be certain all chemicals are kept out of reach. Common household cleaning products are toxic to animals as well as humans. Animals, just like children, do not recognize the danger these products pose to their health. The following is a list of common products found in most homes that are hazardous to pets.

- Cleaning agents
- Citronella candles
- Compost piles
- Fertilizers
- Flea products
- Outdoor plants and plant bulbs
- Swimming pool treatment supplies
- Pesticides
- Fly baits containing methomyl and slug and snail baits containing metaldehyde
- Rat and mouse bait
- Herbicides
- Prescription medication
- Over the counter medication
- Antifreeze
- Liquid potpourris
- Ice melting products
- Batteries
- Christmas decorations, tinsel, ribbons (choking or intestinal blockage hazard)
- Christmas tree water (may contain fertilizers)

If you suspect your pet has ingested something that may be hazardous, or if your pet suddenly shows any change in behavior, appetite, or overall appearance, you should contact your veterinarian immediately. You can also contact The ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center at **1-888-426-4435**. For more information on The ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center visit [www.apcc.aspc.org](http://www.apcc.aspc.org).



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### ***How to Trim Your Cat's Claws***

Regularly trimming your cat's claws is an easy and cat-friendly way to "sharply" reduce the sting from scratching activities. With a little preparation and diligence, claw-trimming can be a simple and pleasant routine.

#### **Preparation**

Get your cat used to your handling and gently squeezing her paws. Don't proceed faster than she'll let you; the idea is for her to become comfortable with this. Note: cats are often more agreeable to new things if they get a treat.

In the interim, your vet or a trusted groomer can trim your cat's claws quickly and cheaply, and will usually be glad to show you how.

#### **Step-by-Step Instructions**

Start with a relaxed cat, sharp clippers, and a good light source, for best results. Some folks prefer specially-made cat clippers (available in pet supply stores), others use regular human nail clippers. Either device works well.

1. Ease into a position that's comfortable for you and your cat. For some, this means kneeling behind kitty, for others this means supporting her in your lap. Calmly talk to her and pet her. You may want to have a treat reward in plain view.
2. If kneeling down behind your cat, secure her gently between your knees, and take a front paw in your left hand. If kitty's in your lap, have her facing to your right, and support her securely in your left arm with her front paw in your left hand. It may be easier at first to wrap her in a towel with only the paw extended. If you're left-handed, use the opposite hand (and face kitty to your left if she's in your lap).
3. With your thumb on top of her paw, and two or more fingers underneath, press gently but firmly on the pad area to extend a claw. It isn't necessary to squeeze hard.
4. Examine the claw closely under light to find the pink area in the center called the "quick." This is a blood vessel, and will bleed if nicked.
5. Holding the clippers in your other hand, make sure there's no chance that the clippers will catch any of the pad. Then snip off the tip of the claw, being careful not to cut into the quick (see picture).
6. Give kitty a treat and a few kind words for being such a good cat. The more relaxed you and she both are, the easier the process will be.
7. Repeat steps 3 through 6 until you have finished the first paw.
8. If your cat is comfortable and compliant, continue until the nails on both front feet have been clipped. If things are going smoothly, optionally clip the back paws. Don't forget the "dewclaw" on the paw's side.





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### Tips

1. Keep some styptic powder or styptic pads handy in case you accidentally cut into the quick. If this should occur, apply the powder to the nail to stop the bleeding, and call it a day.
2. It may be easier if you have a second person holding the cat. Above all, it's important that you and your cat both be relaxed.
3. If at any time your cat becomes anxious, stop immediately. You can do one claw every day, if necessary.

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To view the complete collection of Shelter Sheets, visit

[www.cats.about.com/library/nosearch/blss.htm](http://www.cats.about.com/library/nosearch/blss.htm).

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### Need Help Trimming Cat Claws?

CARE can help! Give us a call and ask for an appointment to bring your cat in for a trim, or to learn to trim.

Call 847-705-2653 and leave a message. This voice mail is available to you 24-7.



# Think Twice Before You Declaw

## The Itch to Scratch

Cats do write. They don't communicate with a pen and paper or by using a computer keyboard. Instead, their prose is cat scratch—literally. They scratch to express their excitement and pleasure. They scratch to leave messages, both visual and aromatic. (A cat's paws have scent glands that leave smell-o-grams; we can't read them, but other cats can.)

Cats also scratch, not to sharpen their nails but to remove the worn-out sheaths from their claws. You see the results as little crescent-moon shaped bits around scratching areas. Scratching is good exercise, too.

Scratching is normal behavior for cats.

Asking a cat never to scratch is asking a cat not to act like a cat.

Most of us don't mind that cats scratch; what bothers us is *where* they scratch. But nearly all cats can be taught where to scratch—and where not to. Kittens are particularly easy to train, but it's not that difficult to teach the adults, either. The secret is to provide attractive scratching alternatives to the sofa or stereo speakers and then teach the cat to use those alternatives.



All cats scratch; it's part of being a cat.

## Reality Check

Just so you know, a typical declaw (called an onychectomy) is an irreversible surgical procedure.

A cat's toe has three bones; the claw grows from the end of the last bone. In declawing, the veterinarian amputates the end section of the last bone, which contains the growth plate, along with the nail. This can be very painful, so pain management is critical before, during and after the procedure.

Some human amputees feel phantom pain long after a limb is gone, and declawed cats also may.

Declawing should never be per-



Scratching is good exercise, and it's fun.

formed on a cat who goes outdoors, since declawed cats have been disarmed.

In many countries declaw surgery is illegal. The American Association of Feline Practitioners advises veterinarians never to include declawing along with spay/neuter as a promotional incentive or to present declawing as a routine surgical procedure.

Even if many cats ultimately do recover without any adverse effects, why take the chance? Why put your cat through the ordeal and yourself through the expense when there are other options?

## How Cats Scratch

Just as we have our own preferences for either pen and paper or a computer keyboard to write our prose, cats, too, have preferences. While almost all cats relish a vertical scratch, many also enjoy a good horizontal scratch. However, all cats seem to agree about certain requirements for their scratching surfaces.

Because cats like to stretch and scratch, favorite vertical scratchers should be

equal to or exceed the cat's height when she is standing on her back legs.

A wobbly vertical scratcher that moves and feels as if it might tip over when a cat sinks her claws in, or a horizontal scratcher that easily slides along the floor, is not stable enough for serious scratching.

Cats like materials they can really sink

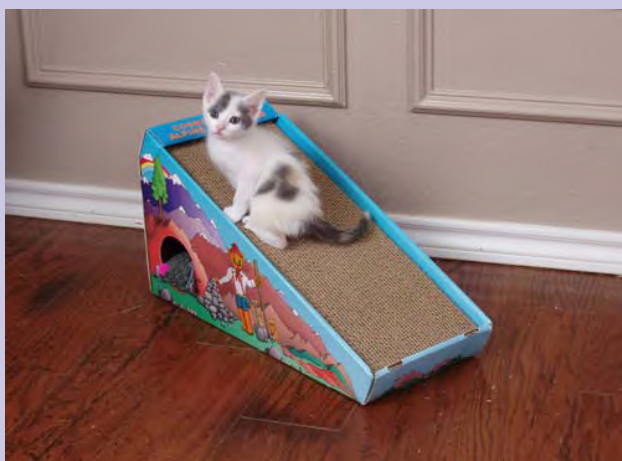
their claws into. Sisal is particularly popular. Natural wood and carpeting (many cats prefer the back side of the carpet) are also favorites. Again, it's all about individual preferences.

An assortment of surfaces and scratchers is ideal, even in a home with just one cat. And several scratching choices are absolutely necessary in a multi-cat household.

## Scratchers 101

Effective horizontal scratchers are relatively inexpensive to buy from a pet supply store. They are often made of corrugated cardboard and sometimes catnip is included to sprinkle into slits cut in the scratcher. Angled cardboard scratchers are especially appealing to many cats, giving them a combination vertical and horizontal scratch in one.

Good vertical scratchers are tall and sturdy, with a wide, heavy bottom to prevent tipping. Industrious souls can build their



Cats like materials they can really sink their claws into.

own cat trees with materials that are easy to get at home improvement stores.

While purchasing a luxurious multi-level cat tree or condo playground is pricey, it's likely to be less expensive than buying a new sofa because the old one has been shredded. The multiple surfaces and perches will attract feline scratchers of all preferences. And when the cats lounge on the cat tree, there will be less cat hair all over your house.

## Location, Location

When you're thinking about where to put the scratching post, keep in mind that, like all real estate, location is everything. Remember that cats scratch to communicate, and leaving a message hidden in the basement or behind the washing machine is not their idea of effective communication.

You'll need to place the scratching post in places cats want to scratch. These include:

- Near where your family congregates.
- Near a favorite napping location, since cats enjoy a good stretch and scratch after awakening.
- Reasonably close to the front door, since many cats like to scratch after their people arrive home. *(Never think your cat runs to the sofa to scratch after you walk through the door because he's angry that you've been away. In fact, your cat is*

*scratching to express his excitement to see you. Reprimanding a cat for being happy to see you is confusing and can damage your relationship with your cat.)*

- As a part of a feline aerobic center, such as a sprawling cat tree, which may also include places to climb, play and snooze.
- Near a window or places where several cats gather to play and party.



## Scratching School

Kittens are especially easy to instruct about where to scratch, but most any cat will learn. Realistically, it will take more time to teach an adult who has been scratching the sofa her entire life than it will to teach a 12-week-old kitty. However, mostly it depends on the individual cat and how good an instructor you happen to be. Just remember to be fair and consistent.

If you're training an impressionable kitten, begin the first day you bring your baby home. It's easier to start a good habit than undo a bad one. Cats

learn by watching, so all you have to do is scratch your nails on the appropriate scratching post and act like you're having a really good time. If your kitten follows your example, offer a pay-off with a tasty morsel and enthusiastically tell your cat how smart she is. Cats have huge egos; they love it when you tell them they're the greatest.

Rubbing catnip on a vertical post and depositing catnip within the corrugated compartment of a horizontal scratcher will entice many adults to scratch.

(Young kittens might not be turned on by catnip. Sometimes it's an acquired taste and a small percentage of cats seem to never develop an interest in catnip.)

Play with your cat around the post using an interactive toy (a fishing pole-type toy with feathers or fabric at the end). Even if the cat just accidentally puts her paws on the post, that's a great start, since now your cat's scent has been deposited on it. Consistently make the area near the scratching post a playground.

## Click and Train

One way to teach your cat where to scratch is by using a clicker to tell him when he is doing the right thing. Clickers are inexpensive and easy to find at pet supply stores.

First teach your cat what the clicker means. Click the clicker and drop a treat on the floor. (For noise-sensitive cats, clicking a retractable pen will do.) Soon your cat will come running from another room when you click because he knows the click means food. Once your cat understands that "click" means "a treat is on the way," you can use the sound of the clicker to train him to do just about anything.

Now entice your cat to paw at the post. This might be as simple as you pointing at the post and kitty following your finger. Also, play with him around the scratching post using an interactive toy. The moment your cat touches the post with any part of his body, click and offer a treat.

Learning sessions should never be more five to ten minutes, and even less time with a kitten. While kittens may actually learn faster than adults, they're at an age when they have very short attention spans. It's important to end a learning session with a treat for a successful behavior.

Begin the next session where you left off—with the kitty merely touching the scratcher. Your next goal is to shape the behavior to what you really want; don't reward the cat until he touches the scratcher with his paw.

In each successive session, hold out for a behavior that's just a little bit closer to what you want before you click and treat. Soon your cat will be scratching at the tree. In addition to the reward it will feel good, so your cat will enjoy the experience. Once your cat begins to scratch regularly, offer rewards only intermittently or else you'll end up with one very pudgy pussy.

## Bad Kitty

What if your cat is scratching up a favorite chair or sofa? Don't take it personally! Remember, scratching these things is only inappropriate to you; it's normal to your cat. You'll need to block her access to the inappropriate place, make sure she has a fabulous scratching post to use instead, and then show her what you want her to do.



Cats will scratch as a part of play activity; kitty condo units are great playgrounds in multi cat homes.

Discouraging your cat from scratching is most effective when you are not a part of the deterrent. That's because if the reprimand comes from you, your cat quickly figures out she can scratch anywhere when you're not around.

Remember what cats like to scratch and what they don't. They

*(Continued on page 4)*

## Think Twice Before You Declaw

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## Help Is Here!

If you still need help, it's available. Ask your veterinarian to help you find a veterinary behaviorist. Or, to find a certified feline behavior consultant where you live, check out [www.iaabc.org](http://www.iaabc.org).

## Bad Kitty

(Continued from page 3)

want to dig their claws into a suitable material and they don't like to feel something bumpy or smooth or sticky. That's why Sticky Paws (available at pet supply stores and on line) is a superbly effective deterrent. These are strips of double-sided sticky tape (designed not to damage furniture) that you can put on fabric or wood. Another option is ordinary double-sided tape.

If you need to cover an entire sofa or chair, try a smooth plastic tarp or shower curtain,

car floor mats (with the nubby side up) or a plastic rug runner (also nubby side up).

When you discourage the cat by simply blocking her access, there is no reason to chase after and/or raise your voice or use a squirt gun. Sometimes these emotional responses will actually encourage cats to scratch, since they so love doing anything to see their people get excited.

Do you need to leave the tarp on your couch forever? Nope. The idea is to make the inap-

propriate items unattractive to kitty and then provide something very attractive to scratch as an alternative. So if your cat is scratching the arm of the sofa, cover it up and place an enticing scratching post right next to the sofa. It's a set-up that tells your cat "Don't scratch there, scratch here instead." When your cat is consistently scratching at the right place for several weeks, you can safely uncover the sofa.



## Paws 'n Order



Maintain kitty's nails, and he won't need to scratch as often.

Keep your cat's nails trimmed by clipping them with a nail cutter every 10 to 14 days. Your veterinarian or a groomer can show you how to do this while offering your cat a special treat as you clip. That way, your cat is so busy eating that he won't notice you're also clipping. Kittens can easily learn to associate a special treat with the nail

clipper, so they actually look forward to the experience. (Well, at least they won't fuss about it.)

If you and your cat just can't see eye to eye about nail trimming, Soft Paws are soft, temporary nail covers that can be fitted over a cat's claws.

## Resources

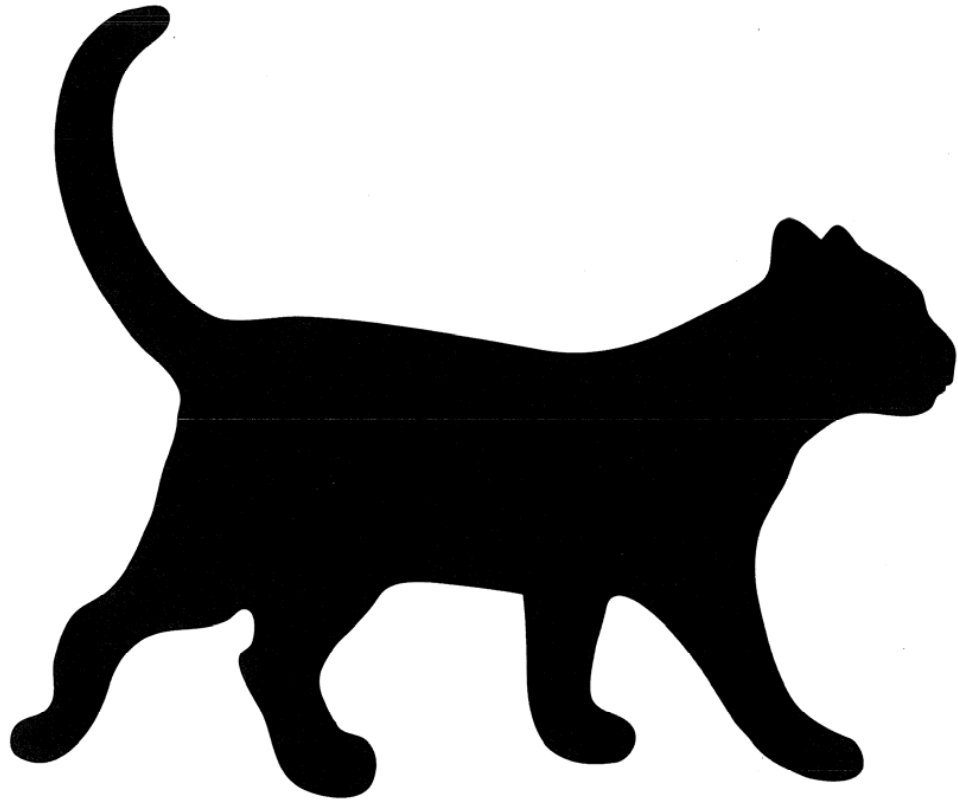
—Learn about clicker training at [www.clickertraining.com](http://www.clickertraining.com) or check out *Clicker Training for Cats* by Karen Pryor, (800) 47-CLICK

—Read *Think Like a Cat* by Pam Johnson Bennett (Penguin Publishing), *Every Cat's Survival Guide to Living with a Neurotic Owner* by Beth Adelman (Main Street Books), *Kittens for Dummies* by Dusty Rainbolt (Wiley Publishing), or *Bring Me Home:*

*Cats Make Great Pets* by Margaret H. Bonham (Howell Book House)

- Angelical Cat Company cat trees: [www.angelicalcat.com](http://www.angelicalcat.com), (954) 747-3629
- Smart Cat Ultimate Scratching Post: [www.esmartcat.com/shopping/ultimate.php](http://www.esmartcat.com/shopping/ultimate.php)

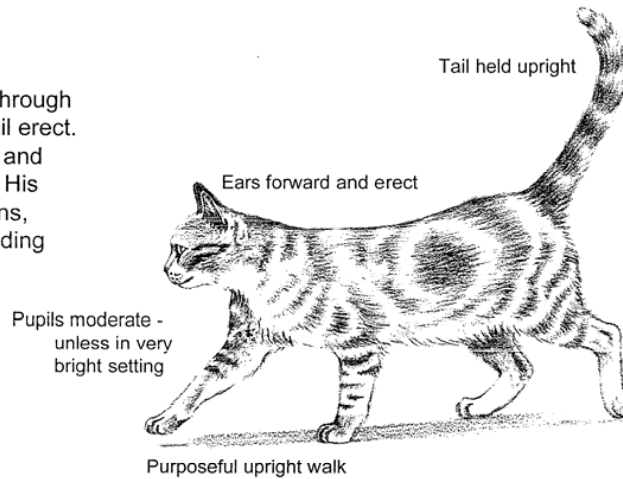
- TopCat Products: [www.topcatproducts.com](http://www.topcatproducts.com), (615) 874-1221
- Soft Paws: [www.softpaws.com](http://www.softpaws.com), (800) 989-2542
- Sticky Paws: [www.stickypaws.com](http://www.stickypaws.com), (817) 926-3023
- Steve Dale's website: [www.petworldradio.net](http://www.petworldradio.net)



# body posture

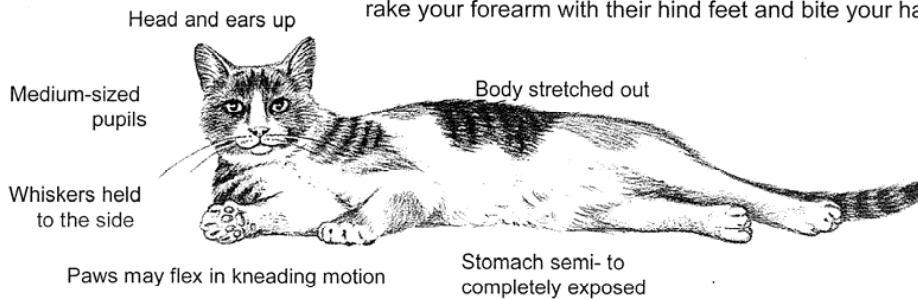
## the confident cat

The confident cat purposefully moves through space, standing straight and tall with tail erect. He is ready to explore his environment and engage those he meets along the way. His upright tail signifies his friendly intentions, while his ears are forward and erect adding to the cat's alert expression.



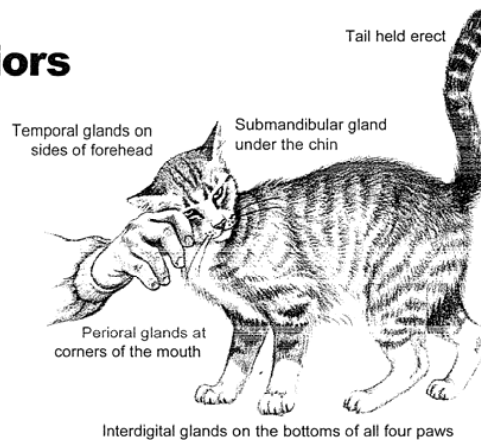
## the confident cat at ease

When relaxed, a confident cat stretches out on his side or lies on his back exposing his belly. He is in a calm but alert state and accepts being approached. His entire posture is open and at ease; but beware, not every cat that exposes his abdomen will respond well to a belly rub. Some will grasp your hand with their front paws, rake your forearm with their hind feet and bite your hand.



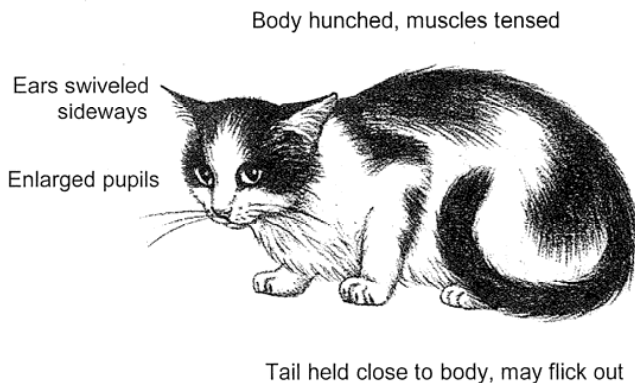
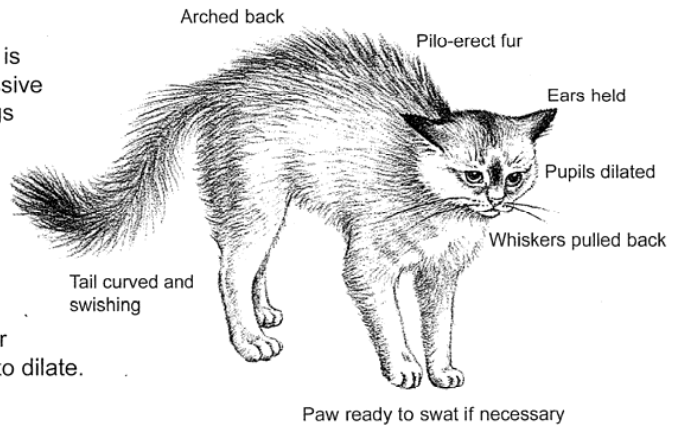
## distance-reducing behaviors

Distance-reducing behaviors encourage approach and social interaction and are meant to telegraph to others that the cat means no harm. The act of rubbing against a person's hand or another cat (scent marking) to distribute glandular facial pheromones from the forehead, chin or whisker bed is calming and seems to guarantee friendly interaction immediately afterward. The tail is usually held erect while the cat is scent-rubbing.



## distance-increasing behaviors

The goal of distance-increasing behaviors is to keep others from coming closer. Aggressive interactions are avoided when the warnings are heeded. Conflicted cats lack the confidence to stare down and charge others. Instead, they assume a defensive threat posture, warning others away by arching their backs, swishing their tails, and standing sideways and as tall as possible. Fear and arousal causes their fur to stand on end (pilo-erection) and pupils to dilate.

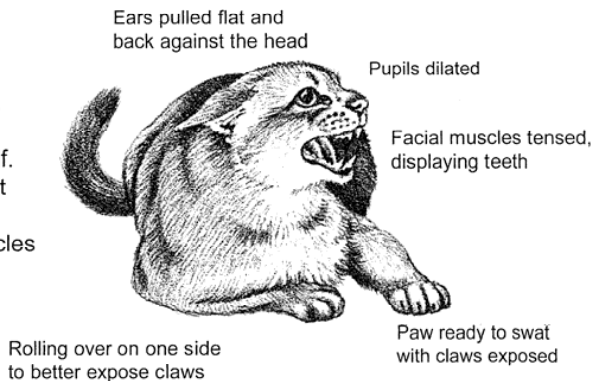


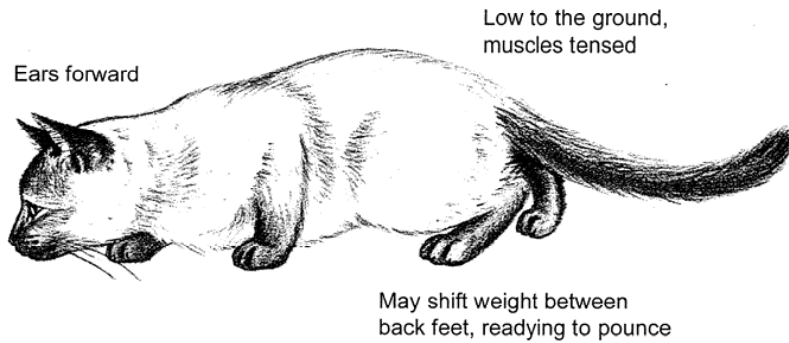
## the anxious cat

When a cat becomes anxious, he crouches into a ball, making himself appear smaller than usual. Muscles are tensed and the cat is poised to flee if necessary. The tail is held close to the body, sometimes wrapped around the feet. The head is held down and pulled into the shoulders.

## defensive aggression

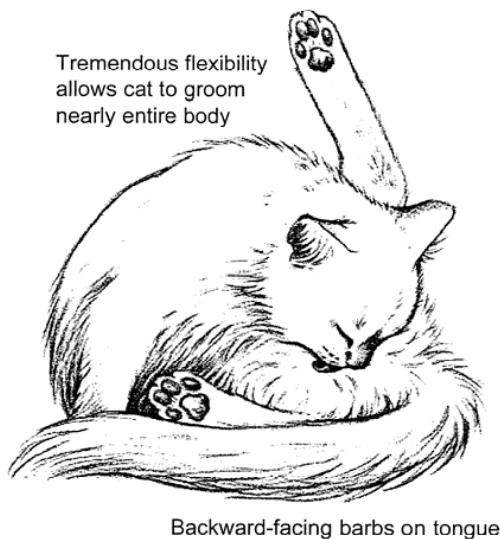
The pariah threat is another distance-reducing posture. When a cat determines that he cannot escape an unwanted interaction with a more dominant animal, he prepares to defend himself. The ears are pulled back and nearly flat against the head for protection and the head and neck are pulled in tight against the body. Facial muscles tense, displaying one weapon - the teeth. The cat rolls slightly over to one side in order to expose the rest of his arsenal - his claws. He is now ready to protect himself.





## the predator

Even when fed two meals a day, cats are still predators. The predatory sequence is stalk, pounce, kill, remove, and eat. When stalking prey, a cat may stealthily move forward or lie in wait, shifting his weight between his hind feet. When movement is detected, the cat pounces on his prey and delivers a killing bite. He may then take the fresh-killed prey to a quiet place to eat -- or a female may take it to her kittens. Even cats that don't hunt for their meals still enjoy chasing moving objects, including toys and, in some cases, human body parts.



## the groomer

Cats spend 30 to 50 percent of their waking time grooming. Backward-facing barbs on the tongue act as a comb to loosen tangles and remove some parasites. Beyond maintaining the cat's coat, grooming also relieves tension and promotes comfort. Licking also facilitates cooling off in warm weather.