

Tips for the First 30 Days of Cat Adoption

<https://www.petfinder.com/cats/bringing-a-cat-home/tips-for-first-30-days-cat/>

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Be prepared should be your mantra when bringing a new pet into your home. Cats are particularly sensitive to new surroundings and some may hide under a bed or in a closet for days or even weeks.

You can avoid pitfalls with your new critter and help him or her adapt more easily by following these guidelines:

Before You Bring Your Cat Home:

- Cats are territorial, and coming into a new home leaves them feeling really uneasy. There's all that unexplored space, and who knows what may lurk there. Do him a favor and provide a small area to call his own for the first few days or weeks. A bathroom or laundry room works well. Furnish the room with cat amenities, such as food, water and a litter box. You'll want to spend time with your cat, so make sure there's a comfortable place for you to sit as well.
- Fill a litter box with one or two inches of litter and place it in his room where he can use it undisturbed. After all, everyone deserves a modicum of privacy when pottying, and giving him that will help forestall litter box aversion. Not sure which litter to choose? Check out [How to Choose A Cat Litter](#).
- Set up a feeding station with food and water bowls. Locate it away from the litter box. For more cat feeding and nutrition tips, visit our [Pet Nutrition](#) section.
- Cats love to get away from it all in small places, and you can provide one for your new cat as his own little safe haven. If he came home in a cat carrier, that might be a good choice. You can also make one by cutting a doorway for her in the end of a box. If you prefer, you can buy a covered cat bed at a pet supply store. In either case, make sure the space is big enough for the cat to stand up and turn around in. Cat "feng shui" probably requires that he or she be able to see the door to the room from his hidey hole, so he won't be startled.
 - A cat's claws need to be worn down, and they [https://www.petfinder.com/cats/bringing-a-cat-home/tips-for-first-30-days-cat/do this by scratching on things](https://www.petfinder.com/cats/bringing-a-cat-home/tips-for-first-30-days-cat/do-this-by-scratching-on-things). Since you prefer that it not be your chairs and sofa, provide your cat with a socially acceptable scratching place. Some types are made of corrugated cardboard and lie on the floor; others are posts which have to be tall enough so that the cat can extend himself upward to scratch. You can encourage your cat (once he has arrived) to use the post by sprinkling it with catnip or dangling a toy at the top. He'll get the idea. You'll probably want a scratching post in each room where there is soft furniture, perhaps blocking access to it. You can also install sticky tape (available at pet supply stores) to corners of upholstered furniture to dissuade scratching. Don't miss these tips on [how to cut down on kitty's scratching](#), [how to choose a scratching post](#), and facts about [declawing cats](#).
- Look at your house with a curious cat's eye view for its climbing and exploring potential. When your cat is acclimated to your home, you may be surprised to find him on top of the upper kitchen cabinets, so make sure there's nothing on display there or on other high shelves that can be damaged or knocked off.
- Look for holes or registers that leave ductwork accessible and cover them up. A kitten can easily slither into one of these. You won't want firemen in the house, jackhammering the concrete floor to extract your cat.
- If possible, buy a cat tree for your new family member. Cats like to survey their territory, so a high perch is often a favored resting place.
- If there are other human family members, go over the ground rules about your new pet. Remind them not to startle him and to keep the door to his room shut.
- Bone up on how to introduce your cat to other pets. Keep her door closed and don't let your other pet race in unexpectedly. See also: New Cat Introductions and [Living with Cats and Dogs](#).

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First Day:

Now, you are ready for your cat's homecoming. Preferably, bring her home in a cat carrier. It will feel safer to her. She has seen a lot of excitement, so take her directly to her new room. (Make sure the toilet lid is down, if she's to acclimate in your bathroom.) Ideally, you would restrict her exposure to the whole family, but naturally, everyone is going to want to see her. Remind them of the ground rules you've set up.

- Sit on the floor and let her come to you. Don't force her. Just let her get acquainted on her own time. If she doesn't approach, leave her alone and try again later. Some cats are particularly frightened, and she may retreat to her hidey hole and not come out when you're around at all. She may only come out at night when the house is quiet. Give her time.
- Your newly adopted cat may not eat much or at all at first. It's best to give your cat the same food she had at the shelter or in her foster home, at least at first. Keeping some things familiar will make her feel more secure. Be sure to change her water frequently and make sure that she is drinking. If your cat hasn't eaten for a few days, call your vet to ask for advice.

Following Weeks:

It may take your cat a week or two to adjust. Be patient.

- Within a week of being adopted, take your newly adopted cat for her first wellness visit with a veterinarian. If you have a record of immunizations from the shelter, take it with you. Don't have a vet? Check out these tips for [finding the right vet](#) for you and your cat.
- As your cat adjusts, she'll show signs that she wants to explore outside her safe haven. Make sure other pets or family members won't startle her while she gradually expands her territory. She may be ready to play, so you can furnish some toys. Many cats like feather wands from the pet supply store, but homemade toys are often favored. A wad of a tissue paper to bat around or a paper bag to hide in can be fun. For more ideas on how to keep your cat entertained see [Keeping Your Cat from Getting Bored](#).

Congratulations! If you follow these tips, you'll be on your way to having a well-adjusted feline family member.

Looking to Adopt a Kitten? Make it a Double!

There are significant social benefits for kittens under six months of age who are adopted in pairs or placed in homes with a resident cat to socialize with. Please continue reading for more information on why our kittens under six months of age have more specialized adoption requirements and let us know if you have questions!

If you are thinking about bringing a kitten into your life, there are many reasons why you should consider doubling the love and bringing home a pair. That's right - start thinking two instead of one! Starting off with two is actually much easier and more beneficial for the kittens and for you.

Sometimes adopters who are thinking about adopting a single kitten think two kittens at once would be a lot of added work. In reality, a second kitten doesn't add much extra work at all, and the benefits of companionship will greatly enrich both cats' lives. Since adult cats are territorial, the introduction process often requires some finesse and lots of patience. Starting off with two feline youngsters is much easier than adding a second adult cat down the road once your kitten grows up.

Here are some fun facts about adopting two kittens:

- ✓ Twice the love!
- ✓ Twice the fun, it's very entertaining to watch two kittens play together!
- ✓ Two kittens will entertain each other while you are busy or away from home.
- ✓ Two kittens will help each other learn important skills like bite inhibition and more! (see below)
- ✓ There is no significant cost to having a second kitten.

So, if you are thinking about adopting a kitten and are unsure whether to adopt a second one as well, let's go more in-depth into the benefits of adopting two kittens!

Kittens Together

Kittens under six months of age are still in the learning stages of life. They learn from their mother, their environment, and very importantly from each other! Kitten-to-kitten interaction and playtime are valuable educational opportunities to help them develop important social skills that will be needed later in life. When kittens interact, they learn how to communicate and interpret each other's signals, how hard to bite during playtime, and how to share territory. In the case of a litter of kittens, the siblings have been together since birth and are already well into this process by the time you come along as a potential adoptive cat parent. What a great way to start!

Another benefit when you are considering bringing a kitten into your home, especially in the case of adoption and/or rescue, is that the kittens may have been without their mother and missed out on important learning opportunities she would have provided. So much learning and socialization takes place in the early part of a kitten's life that when you adopt a pair, the socialization can continue and help create security and comfort.

Kittens Learn From Each Other

If you have ever been around kittens you know they are constantly on the move and into everything! Kitten-hood is such an important time to learn about emerging skills.

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When jumping, the kitten is learning about how to gauge distances. When walking along narrow objects, the kitten is learning balance. This time in a kitten's life that looks to us to be mere play or curiosity is actually a very important part of kitten education. There are so many lessons taking place as kittens stalk, play, leap, climb, tumble, pounce, use their claws and teeth, practice posturing, etc. Since they also learn by observation, a pair of kittens will help each other through this education in ways human interaction cannot. This applies to everything from using the litter box to what objects are safe to land on. Also, a more inquisitive kitten may help a more reluctant kitten's personality to blossom by helping the kitten build confidence and provide security in their companionship.

Kittens & Life Enrichment

For a kitten, the ability to have a companion for playtime can be one of the best forms of life enrichment. Let's face it, most adopters have to work or spend time away from home running errands, going to appointments, etc. and a single kitten can get lonely, bored, fearful, and in some cases destructive. Many people are under the false impression that cats are solitary, independent creatures and don't want or need constant companionship, but they do have a social structure and young kittens truly benefit and thrive when they have a feline (or canine) buddy to keep them company.

The companionship that two kittens provide each other may help prevent future behavior problems and often the bond between two cats who have grown up together becomes very strong and special. ❤️

Single Kitten Syndrome

(Written by MEOW Cat Rescue)

If you've ever raised a litter of kittens or adopted a pair of them, you know how much they play together. Some of this play is painful, as confirmed by the yowling and complaining that occurs. The kittens bite and scratch each other, sometimes quite hard. All the while they are learning from one another that this behavior is not the best way to make friends! If they're lucky enough to have a mom cat around and she hears the ruckus, she will often give a warning "that's enough of that" to the kitten and they settle down.

In order to become well-socialized cats, kittens need to learn appropriate behavior from one another. A human is not a substitute for a feline companion. You can provide attention and love but there is simply no way you can replicate the play behavior of the species. If they don't learn limits in their play as youngsters, they often develop inappropriate play aggression. In other words, it may be cute when a kitten attacks your ankles when you walk by or playfully nips at your fingers while you're playing. It will be much less cute, not to mention annoying and painful, when your cat is full grown.

Over the years we have placed thousands of cats and kittens. We have also had cats returned to us, often as young adults that did not work out in their new homes. What we found repeatedly was that single kittens adopted into homes without other young cats frequently develop behavioral problems. Kittens have been returned because of litter box problems. Litter box habits are learned at an early age and kittens actually play a large part in teaching each other how to faithfully go to the proper place when nature calls. Kittens have also been returned because of aggressive play biting. Cat behaviorists now believe that kittens raised without kitty companionship transfer the playful biting behavior, which is so important in developing proper manners, to their humans. To prevent these problems, and to encourage the general well-being of the kitten, MEOW has adopted a policy of not placing any single kitten under the age of six months into a home without another kitten or young cat.

Two kittens playing together is one of the most entertaining activities in the world, both for you and for the kittens. Having two cats will also ensure that they are not lonely when you are away from home. A lonely cat can become neurotic and will sometimes let his/her owner know about their unhappiness by destructive behavior and inappropriate urination. This is not something most people would like to risk.

MEOW will not place a single kitten under the age of six months into a home without an appropriate feline playmate. This is not about placing more kittens. It's about the future of the individual kittens, their habits and their happiness. Many people have been skeptical about adopting two kittens rather than one only to thank us later for sticking to our policy. The rewards are great. We've never had anyone tell us they wished they had only adopted one.

If you feel you are unable to care for two kittens, we strongly encourage you to consider one of the wonderful adult cats needing a home. Many of these are young mothers and scarcely more than kittens themselves. They're still very playful and entertaining and have learned good kitty manners from being around other cats. Remember, the difference between a cat and a kitten is only about six months. But a happy cat can bring you joy and companionship for twenty years or more. It's well worth laying a good foundation in their early months. The payback is tremendous.



Feline Shopping List

It's exciting when it's finally time to bring home a new feline family member and we want to ensure you are prepared with a list of basics your new cat or kitten will need in their new home. Please consider having the following items ready before bringing your new feline home:

- Food and water bowls
- High quality dry and/or canned food
- Litter box and scoop
- Litter mat
- Litter
- Dr. Elsey's Ultra Litter Attractant
- Nature's Miracle enzymatic odor removing cleaner
- Calming spray or diffuser (Comfort Zone, Feliway, etc.)
- Brush or comb (depending on your cat's coat length and type)
- Nail clippers
- Sturdy cat tree(s)
- Sturdy scratching posts(s)
- Cat bed(s)
- Variety of toys, including wand style interactive toys
- Cat nip
- Feline toothbrush and toothpaste
- Pet carrier
- Vet appointment
- Funds for routine and emergency veterinary care

If you have questions about any of our recommendations please ask our staff, we are always happy to help!