

Suggestion for New Kitty Adopter

A great book to own is Dr. Pitcairn's Complete Guide to Natural Health for Dogs & Cats.

SCREENS

If you do not have permanent screens in windows, get the inexpensive expandable ones at Home Depot or a hardware store. We can't stress enough the importance of screens in preventing the heartbreak of a lost or fallen kitty. NOTE: While we may keep windows closed, we do not have control over what other people who enter our apartments might do, such as painters, workers, landlords, friends or pet sitters. Anyone who enters your apartment might open a window. Screens are essential.

OUTDOOR ACCESS & BALCONIES

If you have outdoor access, again, we stress the importance of kitty staying INDOORS ONLY. Our rescues have already been lost once. You are their second chance. Outdoor dangers are numerous. Like ferals, friendly cats outside face disease, injury and traffic, but friendly cats face an even worse threat- people. Sadly, people do snatch friendly cats off the street to sell to dog fighting trainers or animal testing labs. Balconies and window ledges are also a danger, cats easily fall off them because they are so focused on watching birds or insects that they lose their footing. Cats love to watch activity outside windows, but they do not feel sad or depressed staying indoors. They are just fine watching from the inside!

KITTENS AND THE LITTER PAN

Kittens must start in a bathroom with litter pan and must be put back in the bathroom whenever they are unsupervised. This means when you go to bed, to work or out with friends, kittens must go back into the bathroom. Kittens are toddlers who do not realize they need to use the bathroom until they suddenly have to go wherever they are, including your bed. They might not make it back to the litter pan in time! Also, if they are out playing for a few hours put them back into the bathroom with litter pan for a potty break. It is your job to continue their litter box training, which has been successful in a cage. Your apartment is much bigger so until they are older, follow the kitten protocol and keep them in the bathroom when unsupervised and give potty breaks. The bonus is that when you come home, you will know your kittens have been in a safe room while you were away. MAKE SURE THE TOILET LID IS CLOSED when kittens are in the bathroom. NEVER leave kittens near a bathtub filled with water. The kittens are curious and silly and they can easily drown.

ADULTS AND THE LITTER PAN

We recommend covered litter pans. They look tidier and keep the smells in better. And if the kitty pees a little high it will keep the urine in! If you have a dog you might need a top entry litter box. Unfortunately dogs like the taste of cat poop! Clever Cat is a good one as well as ModCat.

LITTER

We recommend only pellets for kittens who have a tendency to put everything in their mouths. The clumping litters, once digested, pose a hazard. The best pellet litters are Feline Pine, Feline Fresh, Simply Pine and Yesterday's News which is made out of recycled paper. For adults, a clumping litter is convenient. Buy only natural litters without the perfumes. Some good brands are World's Best (corn), Swheat Scoop (wheat), Blue Buffalo (walnut shells), Green Tea Leaves (ditto), Dr. Elsey's (clay without chemicals. They make one with catnip for problem cats called Cat Attract.)

FOOD

Evidence is mounting that feeding popular commercial dry foods or junky wet foods may lead to higher rates of kidney disease, diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure and obesity. These illnesses can be difficult to manage and many are terminal. Cats are true carnivores, unlike omnivores such as dogs, they need REAL meat to thrive, not grains or fillers. We advocate feeding high quality, high protein WET FOOD, not dry food and NO MILK (cats are lactose intolerant). Acknowledging dry food can often be

convenient, make sure that it is a grain-free diet. Some of the best dry cat foods are from Nulo, Orijen, Acana, Fromm, Nature's Variety, Wellness Core and Merrick. And for households on a budget the Costco-Kirkland brand dry food offers a decent quality protein at a value price.

Be careful with veterinary prescription diets- they often contain corn, corn gluten meal, wheat and sometimes soy. Meat is usually not even the first ingredient. Meat or meat meal should always be the first ingredient in pet food. There is a misconception about meal, in high quality foods "meal" means that the undigestible parts are removed from the animal and the meat and organ meats are ground into a meal. Meal contains less water than "meat" so therefore the protein content is higher in a meal than it is in "fresh meat". The pet foods found in grocery and convenience stores sometimes have no meat in them at all, just chicken fat and chicken flavor- not good!

RAW DIET

Cats and kittens generally thrive on a raw meat diet. It is what their bodies are "designed" to eat. Dry pet food is pretty much a meat-flavored cereal. It is cooked at such high temperatures that the vitamins and minerals have to be added back in. The nutrients in a raw diet are more bio-available to their bodies, the animal absorbs more than 90% of the nutrients in raw meat so the waste is minimal...meaning the litter box will be less full and less smelly! Additionally, cats often don't drink enough water, a raw or canned food diet has a much higher moisture content than kibble. The best raw diets for cats are made by Rad Cat, Primal, Nature's Variety, Vital Essentials, and Stella and Chewy's.

FEEDING

Kittens should be able to eat when they are hungry, they are growing and burning lots of calories during playtime. When left alone it is a good idea to leave a bowl of high quality kitten kibble in case they finish their wet food. Some good dry kitten formulas are NOW by Petcurean, Nulo, Core, Merrick and Orijen. As the kitten matures gradually cut back from 4 servings to 3, then to 2 servings by the time they are a year old. Adults should not be allowed to free feed and should not eat dry food if there are any weight issues. Average adult cats should get a 5.5 or 6 oz can per day. If the cat is waking you up too early for breakfast having some dry food around for snacks is advisable. Give a small handful before bedtime and hopefully you'll get a full nights sleep! Also, treat toys work with some cats- they tap into the feline prey drive and provide stimulation for the active cat/kitten.

SCRATCHING POSTS (VERY IMPORTANT)

Cats instinctively scratch to mark territory. They are not being naughty when they scratch! It is in their DNA to scratch, so you must provide an appropriate place for them to scratch. Spraying them with water only stops them temporarily! They usually like to mark territory in high traffic areas so don't put the scratchers in out of the way places.

The best way to stop a cat from scratching furniture is to prevent it from starting. Trim claws regularly and be sure to have 1-2 scratching posts with catnip on them. We recommend the A-shaped sisal scratching post or the tall upright one (A shape better, but harder to find) with catnip on it. Cardboard ones on the floor are ok, but cats still need a taller one set right at the sofa corner.

EXTRA furniture protection: To ensure kitty uses scratching post and not furniture, apply double stick tape (Sticky Paws) or aluminum foil to corners of furniture. Once kitty is in the habit of using scratching posts, you will be fine. However, if kitty ever starts scratching furniture, immediately apply the 2-sided sticky tape or the foil to the sofa corners to stop it quickly.

CLIMBING

Cats are instinctual climbers and will seek out higher places to hang out in your home. To protect your belongings and furniture, it is advisable to provide your new cat/kitten with their own piece of furniture. The best climbers have carpeting and sisal for scratching as well as perches for them to sleep. If you are introducing a new cat/kitten to your cat or dog it is important to have something for them to climb- to get

away, until trust is built between them. Some of the best deals on cat trees/climbers can be found on Amazon- look for free shipping! And if you're handy with tools there are infinite possibilities to create perches and walkways on your walls. If you have a column in your home, wrap it with rope or sisal and watch them go crazy!

DECLAWING

NEVER declaw! It is not simply removing claws, instead, it is like cutting off the ends of your fingers from the last joint! Declawed cats frequently experience lifelong physical pain and emotional issues. They will commonly urinate inappropriately in the house, often on beds or in soft piles of laundry because digging in cat litter actually hurts their paws. They are also known to become biters, without claws as a defensive tool, they resort to nipping. Declawing is illegal in many European countries. Rather than declaw, simply trim the tips of the claws every few weeks. Remember, scratching to mark territory is all about instinct. Your furniture's well-being is in YOUR hands. A kitty must scratch, so you must provide an appropriate scratching alternative.

More specific info can be found at these sites, along with tools to prevent furniture scratching:

www.declawing.com

www.catscratching.com

www.purrfectpost.com

www.softpaws.com

TOYS/CHEWING

Toys prevent boredom! Fabulous toys include jingly balls or crinkly foil balls. DaBird (feather on a stick), CatDancer, Go-Cat Cat Catcher (mouse on a stick) or any wire toys with a small lure at the end, furry mice and soft kitten toys. Most cats enjoy catnip as well as fresh grasses like wheat grass and oat grass. Cats in the wild eat grass to help them regurgitate undigestible matter. House cats are most likely not eating wild prey but grasses can help them bring up fur balls. But mostly, cats just like the taste of grass!