

Kitty Day One



The Advocate for Animals
SINCE 1867

Starting Out Right

	<p>A quiet place to call home. Convert a quiet room in the house into a refuge for your new kitty as she gets accustomed to her new digs. Provide food and water, as well as a litterbox (not too close to her bowls).</p>
	<p>Peekaboo! As cats learn about their environment, they like to have plenty of hiding places. Furniture can offer a natural barrier but even cardboard boxes or paper bags can add a little topography to make things interesting.</p>
	<p>Don't have a party! Make your first evening together at home calm and quiet. Your new kitty has had some big changes today – waking up in a shelter and then finding herself in a new home, so give her some time to figure it all out.</p>
	<p>But have a ball! Though your kitty may not be in the mood to play right away, play can be a great way to break the ice, so have a few toys laying around her refuge and, when you think she's ready, try a little gentle play. Toys like Da Bird or the CatFisher, essentially a fishing rod with a lure on the end, can offer some fun interactive playtime.</p>
	<p>A room with a view. Putting a cat tree next to a window can offer your cat some kitty TV, to watch birds and squirrels at play. It's best <i>not</i> to use a window where there might be feline visitors, as that can make your kitty a little stressed and insecure in her new territory.</p>
	<p>Cat scratch fever! It's a natural behavior for cats to scratch – to stretch, to sharpen their claws, and to mark their territory. Declawing is not a viable option: some kitties suffer the pain for the remainder of their lives as a result, and it can increase the likelihood of their biting. So providing outlets for their claws is essential. Some cats prefer vertical scratching, which can be satisfied by a good quality cat tree. Other prefer horizontal scratching, something as simple as a cardboard scratching box. Don't make the mistake of waiting for her to pick your furniture to use as her scratching post – have outlets available to her on day one.</p>
	<p>Loosening up. Cats respond to catnip differently. Some cats get playful, while others get mellow, and still others don't seem to care about it at all. Start with a catnip mouse toy to experiment with whether your cat finds it attractive or not. If she likes it, then get some loose dried catnip and sprinkle some on her cat tree.</p>
	<p>Chilling out. Feliway is a synthetic pheromone that replicates the happy pheromones a cat has in her cheeks when she rubs against things. Plugging in a Feliway diffuser in your kitty's refuge can help her feel at home faster.</p>

Coming Home to a Multi-Pet Household

	<p>Flying solo. Your kitty has had some major changes in her life today, so this is no time to introduce her to the rest of the furry family.</p>
	<p>It's a process. Over the next days and weeks, you can gradually expose your kitty to the others (and vice versa).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Start by taking clean socks, wiping them on each of the animals and then putting them on the floor in the other animals' space to come upon in their own good time. ✓ If this goes well, start putting food bowls at a distance from either side of the separating door, and moving gradually closer (as long as everyone's eating happily). You can also fashion a double-ended toy to go under the gap of the door so that kitties on either side of the door can play with each other. ✓ Gradually allow short visual introductions at a distance, using treats and interactive play to help associate the presence of the other with good things. ✓ And when all this has gone well, do some group interactive play using toys that still allow some distance so that the cats are getting used to playing and moving in the company of the other(s). ✓ Finally, allow supervised time together, sharing the same space, with toys at the ready should distraction and redirection be required. Reward calm behavior. <p><i>Slow and steady wins this race!</i></p>
	<p>Dog-tied. If there's a dog in the household, he must be leashed in all interactions with the new kitty until you have established calm, quiet behavior with him. Even a friendly, exuberant dog will likely scare the new feline family member and that will start a dangerous pattern of chase. So, with him on leash, put him in a down-stay and allow the kitty to make her howdy-dos at her own pace.</p>

Shopping List

	Bowls	3 non-tip bowls (ceramic or stainless steel), one for canned food, one for dry food, one for water
	Food	High-quality food such as Wellness, Innova, Halo, Natural Balance, California Natural, Instinct. Including canned as well as dry minimizes UTIs, kidney issues, etc.
	Litterbox	Uncovered is preferred, and large enough for your cat to squat in comfortably
	Litter	World's Best Cat Litter is a successful option, but any scoopable sand litter should be good; use paper litter for kittens under 5 months of age.
	Toys	Da Bird, Cat Dancer, laser light, Peek-A-Prize by SmartCat are a few great options, as well as mice and toys that make noise; crumpled paper or foil balls make a good, inexpensive option.
	Food Distribution Toys	SlimCat or Egg-Cersizer are two very effective toys for the distribution of dry food.
	Treats	Some cats prefer hard treats while other prefer softer ones. Also see what flavor palette your kitty prefers: fish, chicken, etc
	Cat Tree	Though these can be expensive, they will last many years. Cats prefer a U-shaped resting place so try to find a cat tree that has one.
	Scratching Post	The SmartCat Ultimate Scratching Post is an excellent, affordable scratching post, available on Amazon, or less expensive cardboard ones are available in pet stores. Use cardboard or sisal, not carpet.
	Feliway Diffuser	The plug-in lasts for a month, also available for less on Amazon.
	Surface Deterrents	Sticky Paws (double-sided tape) and the X-Mat; Bitter Apple spray taste deterrent
	Nail care	Buy a nail clipper or nail caps, available in pet stores. Ask your vet how to safely clip your kitty's nails regularly.
	Cat TV	www.cattv.com
	Catnip	Catnip toys can be fun but loose catnip allows you to sprinkle it on surfaces where you're trying to attract your kitty to roost, like her cat tree.
	Cat Carrier	Buy one that will accommodate your cat as a full-grown adult.