

Kitty Shopping List

1. Food. We recommend a high quality wet and dry food. Feeding a more expensive food is cheaper in the long run; high quality food is made with good meat and is more digestible so less will be wasted in the litter box (another advantage – less stool!). Your cat will be healthier, less prone to disease and will shed less hair.

2. Litter box. The bigger the better! Cats like room to turn around and dig. Higher sides will help avoid spills. Covered boxes should be large enough for the cat to turn around in and stand up straight. Kittens may need to start with a low-sided box.

3. Litter Scoop. For the obvious chore.

4. Litter. We recommend either *clumping* or *nonclumping litter*. Avoid clay clumping litter when possible and silica bead litters, as they may be toxic if ingested or inhaled – especially dangerous for kittens.

5. Cat Carrier. For picking up your new friend and trips to the vet. Never transport a cat loose. Even a calm cat may panic and jump out of your arms or the car.

6. Dishes. Use some from your kitchen or get special ones for your cat. Ceramic or stainless steel is recommended because plastic dishes harbor bacteria.

7. Scratching post. It is best to provide your cat with a large cat tree or post, you want to start good habits from the beginning. Cats like to scratch things right away in a new home because they mark territory that way – so provide a suitable outlet for this urge.

8. Toys. Simple cat-approved toys include ping pong balls, stuffed catnip mice, and laser pointers. Interactive toys such as feather wands or cat charmers are great but should not be left with the cat, as they will destroy the toy or possibly choke on it. No items smaller than a ping pong ball should be allowed, because they are a choking hazard.

9. Brush. Grooming your cat not only reduces shedding and makes her look great, it is a great way to bond and also reduces hair ingestion leading to hairballs.

10. Bed. An old pillow may be chosen by the cat, but many cats adore nest-type beds sold in pet stores. Of course some cats insist on sleeping in your bed!

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Kitty Playtime Toys & Scratching Posts

Playtime is fun for cat and human, and it's a great way to ensure that your cat gets important exercise! Safe play involves a few common sense precautions; If you notice your cat breathing heavily or panting, stop playing until her breathing returns to normal. Don't use dangerous toys or encourage your cat to play with items that you may not want them to later (eg your hands). Do not leave toys out that your cat could choke on or swallow – this includes any string or toy containing string, elastic parts, or small possibly detachable parts. Never let your cat play with rubber bands or items smaller than a ping-pong ball. Do not leave string, yarn, or thread out, if swallowed it can wrap around intestines, requiring expensive and dangerous surgery.

Safe toys for supervised play (lock away when not in use) : Feather wands, laser pointer (don't shine in eyes), Cat Dancer, fabric Cat Teaser

Safe toys for unsupervised play: Ping pong balls or other large solid plastic balls (no superballs!) stuffed catnip mice with no removable parts, (remove jingle bells from end of tails if equipped, cat may chew them off and choke), Kong toys.

Unsafe toys: Do not allow your kitten or cat to play with ribbons, string, small balls that can fit in their mouth (chocking hazard), paperclips, thumbtacks, rubber bands, any toys that have unsecured parts that can be chewed off and swallowed or choked on. Costly surgery and sometimes death can be the result of not properly kitten or cat-proofing your home!

Scratching Posts and Cat Trees

Cats scratch surfaces as a way of marking territory and to remove old claw sheaths. It is a natural part of cat behavior, and must be accepted as such. In order to avoid the destruction of furniture or carpets, immediately provide your cat with her own scratching surface. You may need to try several types to find out which one she prefers.

Some variants are; sisal rope, wood, carpet, and cardboard. Catnip can be used to attract cats to the scratching post. If you provide a few choices your cat will be less likely to go for the furniture. We highly recommend a tall post covered with woven sisal (better than sisal rope) and provides both vertical and horizontal surfaces. It will last a lifetime and is an attractive piece of furniture with real wood trim. Cats go crazy over this kind of post!

Most cats prefer a tall, vertical surface to stretch up against and scratch. You can construct a simple "cat tree" by screwing a 3' post to a 2' by 2' square heavy plywood base. The post can be left bare or covered with carpet or wrapped with woven sisal. Sisal remnants can be purchased from rug makers. If you make

your own post with carpet, be sure to melt the edges of the carpet to prevent unraveling, swallowing long strings from unraveled carpet has sent more than one cat to hospital for expensive surgery. Check out the internet for plans for building cat trees.

If your cat still goes for the furniture, place double-sided carpet tape (sold in pet stores as Sticky Paws, which is clear and removes easily from the surface) in the place she scratches. Cats don't like the sticky sensation. Place a suitable post right beside the place she scratches and praise her when she uses it. Never chase her or yell at her when she scratches furniture, she'll just associate the punishment with you and see it as a territory challenge, and may end up scratching more! Cat repellent sprays hardly ever work.

Introducing Your New Cat to Resident Cat

Cats who live in the same house may never become the best of friends, but usually learn to at least tolerate each other with a minimum of conflict. You will need to take some time to introduce your cat to other family pets in order to prevent fearful and aggressive problems from developing.

Introducing A New Cat to Other Cats

1. Confine the new cat to one room with its litter box, food, water, and a bed. Feed the present cats and the newcomer near either side of the door to this room. Gradually move the dishes closer to the door until the cats can eat calmly directly on either side. Next, use two door stops to prop open the door just enough to allow the cats to see each other, and repeat the whole process.
2. A product called Feliway (www.feliway.com) - available at most pet stores - can be useful when introducing a new cat – it mimics relaxing pheromones that cats exude from their cheek glands. Spraying doorways and furniture where the cats encounter each other with Feliway can help ease introductions.
3. Switch sleeping blankets between the new cat and resident cats so they have a chance to become accustomed to each other's scent.
4. Once the new cat is using her box and eating regularly while confined, let her have free time in the house while confining the other cats. This switch provides another way for the cats to experience each other's scent without a face to face meeting. It also allows the newcomer to become familiar with her new surroundings without being frightened by other animals.
5. Avoid any interactions between the cats which result in either fearful or aggressive behavior. If these responses are allowed to become habit, they can be difficult to change. If either cat becomes very fearful or aggressive, separate them, and continue the introduction process in a series of gradual steps, as outlined above. You'll need to add another litter box and scoop and clean all the boxes more frequently. Make sure that none of the cats is being "ambushed" by another while trying to use the box. Expect hissing, spitting and growling. If a fight breaks out, do not interfere directly. Instead throw a blanket over each cat, wrapping the blanket around the cat before picking him up. Separate the cats until they have calmed down. It may be best to leave the cats separated when you are not home until you are sure they are getting along well.

Successful introductions usually require time and patience, don't expect things to be perfect overnight!

Introducing a New Cat to a Resident Dog

Dogs and cats who have not experienced each other will require some extra time to become accustomed to each other. Dogs usually want to chase and play with cats, and cats are usually afraid and defensive. You can use any of the techniques described in "Introducing a new cat to other cats." If your dog does not already know the commands "sit," "down," "come," and "stay," you should begin working on them. Little tidbits of food increase your dog's motivation to perform, which will be necessary in the presence of such a strong distraction as a new cat.

Begin as described in Introducing a New Cat to a Resident Cat article. Take the time to go through the steps.

1. Once the cat is comfortable in the house and has been introduced to the smells of the dog, you can attempt a face to face introduction in a controlled manner. Put your dog's leash on, and command him to either "sit" or "down" and "stay,". Have another family member enter the room and quietly sit down with the cat on his or her lap. At first, the cat and dog should be on opposite sides of the room. Praise both and give treats. Repeat this step several times until both the cat and dog are tolerating each other without fear, aggression, or other uncontrollable behavior.

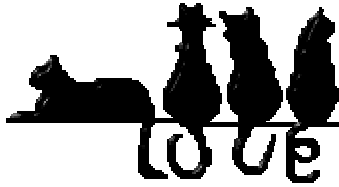
2. Next, move the animals a little closer together, with the dog still on a leash and the cat gently held in a lap. If the cat does not like to be held, you can use a wire crate or carrier instead. If the dog gets up from its "stay" position, it should be firmly repositioned, and praised and rewarded for obeying the "stay" command. If the cat becomes frightened, increase the distance between the animals and progress more slowly. Providing the cat with a cat tree or high place to be above the dog will help her feel more confident.

3. Try to direct each session so the dog is likely to do the right thing and get praise. Although your dog must be taught that chasing or being rough with the cat is unacceptable behavior, if your dog is always punished whenever the cat is around, and never has "good things" happen in the cat's presence, your dog may associate the cat with unpleasant reprimands.

4. You may want to keep your dog on a leash and with you when the cat is free in the house during the introduction process. Be sure that your cat has an escape route, and a place to hide. Keep the dog and cat separated when you aren't home until you are certain they will both be safe.

Precautions: Dogs like to eat cat food because it is very high in protein, and therefore very tasty, but it's not good for them. Keep cat food out of the dog's reach (in a closet, on a high shelf, etc.). Likewise, cats should not eat dog food exclusively as it may cause dietary deficiencies.

Dogs like to eat cat feces, and although there are no real health hazards to the dog from this habit except possibly increased vomiting, it is usually distasteful to the owners and disruptive to the cat's use of the box. The best solution is to place the litter box where the dog cannot access it such as behind a baby gate, install an interior cat door to a laundry room, or build/purchase a litterbox bench (like a toybox with cat-sized hole) to contain the litterbox.



FIV Positive Cats

FIV positive cats can have a difficult time finding homes, even though in all respects they are normal, loving cats. Please don't allow the FIV stigma to prevent you from opening your heart and home to a wonderful kitty companion.

FIV stands for Feline Immunodeficiency Virus. It's a lentivirus, meaning that it progresses very slowly, gradually affecting a cat's immune system. The virus weakens the cat's defense against disease but does not eliminate it altogether. Cats that test positive for Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV) can live long and healthy lives, sometimes with no symptoms at all.

Here are some facts about FIV:

1. The Feline Immuno-deficiency Virus is a slow virus that affects a cat's immune system over a period of years.
2. The virus can be spread through blood transfusions, badly infected gums, or serious, penetrating bite wounds.
3. FIV is a cat-only disease and cannot be spread to humans or other non-felines.
4. FIV is cannot be spread casually - like in litter boxes, water and food bowls, or when snuggling and playing.
5. FIV cats most often live long, healthy, and relatively normal lives with no symptoms at all.

In order for a FIV cat to live a long and healthy life, it is important to keep the cat's immune system strong. Here are some general rules for protecting FIV positive cats from disease.

1. They need to live in a household as the only cat, or with other FIV positive cats.
2. They need to be kept indoors to avoid non-FIV, healthy cats that are often carriers of disease germs that their immune system prevents from turning into a full-blown infection. The FIV positive may get infected and become ill.
3. They must be free of external and internal parasites as they weaken the body by taking away vital nutrients and may also harbor disease.
4. They are not to eat uncooked meat or fish. Raw meat may contain parasites and potentially harmful germs.
5. They must be fed a high-quality healthy diet to assist the cat's immune system to function better.
6. Treat any secondary problems as soon as they arise. Regular vet checkups are recommended.
7. Give him or her plenty of love and attention.