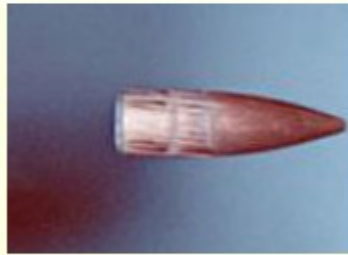


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Choosing & Caring For A Cat Naturally



Elizabeth Beresford

[Cats & Cat Health](#)

<http://www.cat-purrfect.com>

About This Book

This is a short introduction to choosing and caring for a kitten or a fully grown cat. There is a great deal more to learn on this topic and further reading is recommended in the [resources section](#) at the back of this e-book.

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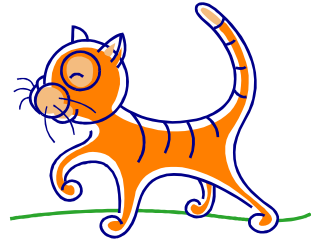
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Preparing to Own A Cat

Before you decide to own that cute little kitten there are a few important things to consider. No doubt that is why you are reading this little book.



First, if you have never lived with a cat you must find out whether you are allergic to them. Allergy is the main reason that cats are re-homed or sent to a shelter. If he is no longer a kitten by then, sadly, he stands a poor chance of being re-homed. And of course both you and your family will also be very sad.

If you tend to be allergic to pollen or other airborne allergens it is likely that you, or your children, will also be allergic to cats. It really isn't possible to live happily with a cat if it makes your eyes and nose itch all the time.

If you've never spent much time around cats, try to spend a few hours in a home with them and see if you feel at all allergic. Bring with you any family member who has a tendency to allergy. If it isn't possible to spend time with a cat you could get an allergy test done. Take your time until you are sure you aren't going to be affected by cat fur.

Next, you may want to consider your lifestyle. Although most cats need less interaction than dogs, a kitten, who has after all just left his playful littermates, can easily become lonely and bored if left alone all day, especially if he is kept indoors. A bored kitten is often a nuisance, scratching the furniture, knocking things over, and generally trying to amuse itself in ways you won't like. If you work long hours getting two kittens to keep each other company is much kinder.

If you have a baby, or are expecting one, it isn't a good time to get a kitten or cat. Wait until the baby is a little older before acquiring one. Cats can become jealous of a new baby and there is also the danger of the cat lying on a sleeping infant if the crib is not safely covered. You will have enough to do in looking after your baby without having to give time to a new cat.

Most homes can manage to fit a cat into them, but just be sure that yours will. Cats need more equipment if they are going to be indoor cats. Indoor cats need a litter box, litter, toys, and a scratching post. You will also need to spend more time playing with your cat if he is not allowed the freedom to play outside on his own.

It seems that indoor cats only exist in the USA. I am not from there and I find the whole concept of keeping a cat indoors difficult to understand. I have read the reasons, that they are safer from mean people, marauding dogs, traffic and illnesses. I guess you know your own conditions. For myself I think that I would

still take the risk because cats so love the outdoors and I can't imagine one being truly free and happy if they only see it through a window. Keeping a cat indoors is just not a custom I am used to, but I will try not to let my prejudices influence this book!

Once you decide that a cat will fit into your household, the next question is whether you want a kitten or an older cat and whether a pedigree or mongrel.

Most people can't resist a kitten, they are so adorable. But consider an older cat if you want a slightly less energetic pet that doesn't need training. You can easily find both cats and kittens at a rescue center. If you have small children be sure you don't choose a cat which has been ill treated. If it has, it may take a great deal of time and patience to renew its trust and turn it into a happy loving pet. A frightened or insecure cat will not put up with little children and may bite or scratch them.

When choosing a kitten go for the one that comes to the front to see you. Don't choose one that hangs back shyly. The outgoing ones make the best pets. I ignored my own instincts on this when I picked up my current cat, Alfie.

Luckily my children are grown up and there are no small children around yet. He is lovely and I wouldn't part with him, but he isn't the outgoing type and he has taken a lot of time to learn not to bite. He hates to be picked up or bothered in any way unless he so chooses, and will kick us away if he doesn't feel like being petted. This wouldn't do for kids, they like to pick cats up and cart them around even dressing them up in dolls clothes, as I used to with my very patient childhood cat. Alfie wouldn't have any of that!

Most kittens are already house trained by their mother. A kitten should never leave its mother before it is 8 old. If it leaves her any sooner it may have some problems that are hard to cure. So always check that it is old enough before you take it.

Choosing A Breed

There are so many cat breeds as well as plain ordinary moggies without any pedigree at all. How can you decide which is right for you and your family?

If you just want a great pet and aren't concerned with owning a specific breed, the best place to look is your local humane society or animal rescue center. These organizations are usually overrun with healthy cats and kittens just longing for a home.

If you are looking for a specific cat breed attending a cat show is a good way to find one. Many exhibitors bring along a few kittens that are for sale. Even if you

can't find kittens of the breed you are looking for at the show, you can ask exhibitors to place you on a waiting list for one of their kittens.

Do you want a cat that likes to talk to you? Some cat breeds are well known for being very talkative and, although many cat owners love these vocal breeds, some people find it annoying. Breeds that are very vocal are Siamese, Korat, and Burmese. The Scottish Fold, Somali, and the American Curl are very quiet cat breeds.

Some of the friendliest cat breeds are the Snowshoe, Abyssinian, Maine Coon, Ragdoll, Tonkinese, and the Himalayan Persian. Less sociable breeds are the Norwegian Forest Cat, the Nebelung, and the Russian Shorthair.

If you are looking for a cat who can amuse himself and will not get into constant mischief, then avoid the Sphynx, Siamese, Rex, Balinese, and British Angora breeds, which are very inquisitive and energetic. But if you are at home and have a lot of free time these cats are wonderful company. In fact, the Rex is downright silly in his attempts to amuse those around him.

Of course, while you are deciding on a cat breed don't get so caught up in selecting the right temperament that you overlook other important features. One of the most important things to consider when you are looking for the right cat is whether you want a long haired or short haired breed.

People who don't have a lot of time to devote to a pet may want to opt for a short haired breed. Although that fuzzy ball of fluff may look adorable right now, grooming adult long haired cats can take up quite a lot of time. If you neglect your cat's coat, it can tangle and matt up at an alarmingly fast rate, right down to her skin. Once this happens, your only option is to have her shaved completely, which can be quite traumatic.

Pedigree Cats

If you are sure you want a particular breed, and there isn't a cat show coming up, contact the Cat Fancier's Association (CFA). This is the largest purebred cat registry in the world. The CFA was created to maintain breed standards and register litters of purebred kittens. The CFA recognizes only forty one breeds of cats.



When a breeder registers a litter of kittens with the Cat Fancier's Association, he or she has the option of deciding whether or not the kitten can be bred. Only cats with a pin number on their registration forms will be eligible to have their kittens registered. This allows the breeders to continue to better their breeds. Once the litter is registered, each kitten will need to be individually registered by its new owner.

The CFA has placed the cat breeds it recognizes into three categories. These groups are the Championship Class, the Provisional Class, and the Miscellaneous Class. Each of the forty one breeds that the CFA recognizes is placed in one of these groups. When cats are shown, they must win first place in their breed and then their class before they can compete for the title of best in show.

Cats in the Championship Class are those who are solidly established cat breeds. The breeds in the Provisional Class have been more recently established and are still being closely watched to be sure they conform to the new breed standard. Finally, those in the Miscellaneous Class are still having a breed standard created and cannot yet compete for the best in show title.

If you live in Canada, you have a second option. You can register your cat in the [Canadian Cat Association](#). This association was formed by Canadians who did not want to register their cats with an association in another country.

Other popular cat registries are the [Traditional Cat Association](#), which supports original breed standards and does not uphold current trends that exaggerate breed characteristics, the [Governing Council of the Cat Fancy](#), which is the United Kingdom's cat registry, and the [Fédération Internationale Féline](#), which is the European cat registry.

Although there are many breeds of cats, they all fit into one of two categories, short hair or long hair. Short hair cats include breeds such as the Abyssinian and the British Shorthair, while Norwegian Forest Cats and Turkish Angoras are representatives of long hair cats.

Of the forty one CFA recognized cat breeds, the most popular in the USA is the American Shorthair, which has been in the United States for over 300 years.

Although non-pedigreed pet cats often resemble this breed, it has actually been carefully and selectively bred for generation after generation to develop characteristics that would appear in every kitten. Other popular breeds are the Siamese, the Rex, the Main Coon, the Persian and the Ragdoll.

Just remember, a pedigree doesn't make your kitten any more loving and affectionate. There are many wonderful pet cats without a pedigree. However, a pedigree does enable you to pick out a kitten that will have certain characteristics

Multi Cat Households

For many people, a single cat is the ideal situation. However, for others, cats seem to be like potato chips. They can't stop with just one.

Is owning more than one cat right for the cat you already own? If you do want more than one cat it is better to get them both from the same litter when they are kittens. Most adult cats do not like the intrusion of another cat or kitten into "their territory", aka your home. However it isn't impossible, and a new cat can usually be integrated into the home if it is done with care and understanding of the incumbent's feelings.



Although some people feel that their cats will be more at home with a cat from the same breed, many cats are quite happy to hang out with other breeds. Of course you shouldn't pair cats with completely different temperaments. A boisterous, clownish Rex cat will not get on well with a self contained Russian Blue for example.

How To Integrate A New Cat or Kitten

If you are bringing a new kitten into your home there are ways to make the introduction easier. Don't bring a kitten home and leave it to fend for itself nor should you present it as a "pleasant" surprise to your resident cat. He will not find the surprise in the least pleasant! Instead of placing the cats together immediately, allow your original cat to gradually get accustomed to the new arrival.

Here is a much less threatening way to get your resident cat and the kitten off to a good start in sharing a home.

- Hire a kittening pen from your veterinarian (or use a crate), and place it in a room where your cat doesn't spend any time. Place the kitten's food, water, litter tray, bed and toys in the pen. When the kitten arrives put it in the pen but leave the pen door open so he can wander around and explore the room.
- Play with the new kitten when he is awake, as he will feel lonely without his littermates. At the same time be sure to give your cat plenty of attention too, but not more than he wants or usually gets.
- After a few days let your cat meet the kitten by leaving the door to the kitten's room open. Place your cat's feeding bowl, with some of his favorite food, in the doorway and at the same time feed the kitten.

- If this goes off all right continue to feed the two animals in the same room gradually moving the cat's food closer to the kitten pen.
- Next, exchange the kitten and the cat's bedding, to accustom them to each other's scent.
- If all seems to be going well and the older cat is not showing any aggression toward the kitten open the pen and allow them to meet in their own time.
- This whole process could take several weeks or just a few days depending on the cat's temperament.

For a smooth transition, be sure your first cat doesn't have to share his litter box, food and water bowls, scratching post or toys with the newcomer. Cats which are forced to share litter boxes may decide to create their own private litter boxes in other less convenient places!

All of this may sound like a great fuss, but it is worth it I promise you. If your cat is faced with a new kitten without any preparation he may attack it or, depending on his personality, he may become very depressed.

Cat Growth Stages – How a Cat Matures

When a kitten is born, it is hard to believe that one of these helpless little pink things will become a graceful and powerful hunter. However, within a year, that tiny kitten will be a mature cat.



As a kitten is born blind and completely dependent on its mother, it is no surprise that its first stage involves little more than eating and growing. However, once your kitten's eyes open, he will begin to explore the world around him. By the time he is four weeks old, he will be romping shakily about with his siblings. He can begin to learn to use the litter box and should start to become socialized. In the wild, a kitten's mother will start to supplement his diet with dead mice or other small prey. You may give him some soft kitten food instead.

By the time your kitten is six to eight weeks old, he is ready to begin exploring a bit further from home. If he is indoors, he will venture into other rooms, while a feral kitten will begin to follow his mother when she goes to hang out with the rest of the local cat colony. While the kitten's mother may still bring him mice, they are no longer already dead. The kitten begins to develop his hunting abilities. Eight week old kittens are usually completely weaned and ready to go to a new home.

Over the next several months, kittens will continue to grow fairly quickly. They need to receive a series of vaccinations so that they stay strong and healthy. (But check out the our [recommended reading](#) on this topic.)

They will begin to learn how to coexist with their families and will learn which behaviors are allowed. Your kitten should learn his name and a few simple commands. Also, especially if you have a long haired cat, it is important to get him used to the grooming process now, even if he doesn't actually have a coat that needs to be brushed yet.

Teen Cats

Has your sweet little kitten suddenly developed a bad attitude? Cats go through an adolescent stage to transition from being a kitten to being a mature cat, just as human children do. This stage usually begins at around five to six months and may last until your cat reaches his first year. He will still be very playful, but may occasionally get carried away and play too aggressively.

If you do not neuter your cat, at six months of age he or she will be mature enough to reproduce. Neutering your cat will help her to get through this stage much more smoothly. At six months of age, your cat will look pretty much like she

will look as an adult although she will fill out and bulk up as she continues to mature.

Of course, once she is an adult, your cat will go through additional stages, such as middle age, just as humans do. The good news is that you won't have to worry that little Fluffy will run out and buy a sports car if he has a bit of a mid-life crisis.

Feeding Your Cat – Make Sure Your Cat Gets the Nutrition He Needs

Feeding your cat properly is the most important thing you can do to ensure he or she lives a long and healthy life.

For the first few weeks of his life, your kitten received all of his nutrition from his mother. As he reached four to six weeks of age, the breeder probably began supplementing the mother cat's milk with canned kitten food or with hard kitten chow moistened with water. By the time your kitten reached eight weeks of age, he was weaned and eating a diet of kitten food. The breeder or rescue center should have given you some of the food your kitten was eating, or at least told you what to buy for her.

If you want to change the food that your kitten is eating, you should do this gradually by mixing it with the food you plan to give her. This way your kitten will be able to adjust to the new food without upsetting her digestion.

Young kittens need to eat quite often, just like a new baby they have a lot of growing to do. She will need to eat more than once a day. In fact, kittens under six months of age do best with four small meals a day, since they do not have very large stomachs, but need plenty of fuel. You should give your kitten an unlimited water supply, and cats do prefer their water to be in a different area than their food.

Once your kitten reaches six months of age, her rate of growth slows down dramatically and she will become a bit less active. You can cut her feedings back to two to three meals a day now. However, you should not change her food from kitten chow to adult food yet, as she is still a growing fast. Once she reaches one year old she can finally eat adult cat food.

What Should A Cat Eat?

Since food is the bedrock of health it is worth thinking carefully about what you will give your cat to eat. There is plenty of controversy about feeding commercial pet foods, and particularly around feeding dry kibble. I must declare myself a follower of the school of thought that espouses a natural diet, such as cats would eat in the wild.

Feeding your cat well is very important and it is the main reason I wrote this book. I want to spread the word that cats can live longer and be healthier if you feed them the diet they were designed to eat. Cats can live up to 30 years but most domestic cats only live for 12 to 16 years. Do you want your pet to live a long healthy life?

Why You Should Not Feed Your Cat On Dry Food

There is a lot of information on feeding cats a healthy diet written by veterinarian Dr. Lisa A. Pierson DVM. You can find it on [her website](#). Another informative site is: [catnutrition](#).

An increasing number of American Veterinary Medical Association members, including board-certified veterinary nutritionists, are now strongly recommending the feeding of canned food instead of dry kibble. There are three reasons why dry food is bad for your cat.

1. They contain insufficient animal based protein and an excess of vegetable protein.
2. Many contain animal by-products as their main or only source of protein. By-products are animal parts considered unfit for human beings to eat, such as feet, intestines, feathers, egg shells and can even include organs from diseased livestock.
3. They contain too much carbohydrate. Cats are pure carnivores that neither need, nor can they thrive, on the amount of carbohydrates in dry foods.
4. Cats do not always drink enough to make up for the lack of water in the food. Insufficient fluid causes kidney and bladder stones.
5. Many use unhealthy preservatives such as such as BHA, BHT and ethoxyquin.

6. They can lose nutrient value due to their long cooking time at very high temperatures.
7. Oils in them can become rancid after being stored in warehouses and supermarket shelves.
8. There may also be extremely dangerous and life-threatening fungal toxins found in them.

Sounds nasty doesn't it? Do you want to risk it?

“In the wild, your cat would be eating a high protein, high-moisture content, meat-based diet, with a moderate level of fat and with only approximately 3-5 percent of her diet consisting of carbohydrates. The average dry food contains 35-50 percent carbohydrates.

Some of the cheaper dry foods contain even higher levels....Cats have no dietary need for carbohydrates and, more worrisome is the fact that too many carbohydrates can be highly detrimental to their health” *Dr. Lisa A. Pierson DVM:*

So what can you safely feed your cat on?

Dr. Pierson advises:

- Use quality canned food. Check the label, protein should be the first ingredient and it should be muscle meat, not organ meat such as liver, and not animal by-products. Nor should it contain “meal”. Some liver or heart is good, but not as the main ingredient.
- It should not contain grains, Never use feed that contains wheat, soy, corn or yeast. If it does have grains rice is the safest.
- Cats can't thrive purely on meat. Good quality canned or frozen cat food includes supplements such as oils, vitamins and minerals.

You can make your own cat food at home of course, and Dr. Pierson gives a [recipe for it on her site](#). But most people just do not have the time to make their own cat foods. So here are some of the cat foods available in North America that are better quality, as recommended by Dr. Pierson:

- Wellness (look for grain free varieties)
- Nature's Variety
- Evo
- Wysong's Au Jus Canned Meats (Plus add Wysong's "Call of the Wild" supplement to if used as a sole diet)
- Avoderm Selected Cuts (complete diet)
- Wysong's Archetype, (cold compressed feed to which you add water)
- Merrick canned grainless food (note: some Merrick varieties do contain grain)
- Country Cat (frozen)

If you live elsewhere you should make inquiries about organic cat foods and read labels. Good quality cat food is not always found in supermarkets.

We have such a great responsibility when we take on the care of a cat. In the past cats were not fed a commercial diet, they caught mice and rats and lived on those. That was so much better for them than the food we give them today. Mice have all the right nutrients for a cat. They get the muscle meat, predigested stomach contents which may contain some plant materials, the calcium from the bones and so on. No rice, no wheat, no soy, no yeast!

After reading Dr. Pierson's information I changed my cats food. I had always fed him very high quality dry food which contained no by-products and thought I was giving him the best. But when I read the label I found that it contained a lot of wheat and too much carbohydrate.

He wasn't too hard to change because as well as dry food I had also given him both raw and canned foods, so it wasn't too much of a change for him. At first he didn't like the tinned food I found for him, so I introduced it gradually by mixing with his usual food. He got used to it after a time.

If your cat has only ever had dry food it will probably take a bit of patience to gradually shift her to a wet food diet. Mix wet food in with the dry and gradually increase the proportions until she gets used to the new food.

More excellent feed information can be found here: [RESOURCES](#)

Why Cats Scratch

Are your chairs, window screens, and rugs all turning to confetti beneath your cat's lethal claws? If so, you may be wondering how you can stop this behavior. It may be easier to stop your cat from destroying your home if you understand why she scratches at all.

Before cats were domesticated, they were deadly hunters. They relied on their razor sharp claws to help them climb trees so that they could leap down on their prey. Today, cats may get dinner from a bowl, but they still sharpen their claws. Scratching is their way of trimming their nails, it removes the old outer part of the claws.

Another reason cats scratch, apart from the sheer enjoyment of it, is to let other cats know that the house and yard belong to them. When cats scratch, they release scent that marks that spot as theirs.

Please Do Not Declaw Your Cat

If you are getting fed up with your cat's scratching, you may be planning to declaw him. Please don't do this. In England declawing is termed "inhumane" and "unnecessary mutilation." In many European countries it is illegal. If you declaw you are crippling and maiming your cat.

I have taken the following passage from veterinarian [Dr. Christianne Schelling](#).

“Before you make the decision to declaw your cat, there are some important facts you should know. Declawing is not like a manicure. It is serious surgery. Your cat's claw is not a toenail. It is actually closely adhered to the bone. So closely adhered that to remove the claw, the last bone of your the cat's claw has to be removed. Declawing is actually an amputation of the last joint of your cat's "toes". When you envision that, it becomes clear why declawing is not a humane act. It is a painful surgery, with a painful recovery period. And remember that during the time of recuperation from the surgery your cat would still have to use its feet to walk, jump, and scratch in its litter box regardless of the pain it is experiencing. Wheelchairs and bedpans are not an option for a cat.

No cat lover would doubt that cats--whose senses are much keener than ours--suffer pain. They may, however, hide it better. Not only are they proud, they instinctively know that they are at risk when in a weakened position, and by nature will attempt to hide it. But make no mistake. This is not a surgery to be taken lightly.

Your cat's body is perfectly designed to give it the grace, agility and beauty that is unique to felines. Its claws are an important part of this design. Amputating the important part of their anatomy that contains the claws drastically alters the conformation of their feet.

The cat is also deprived of its primary means of defense, leaving it prey to predators if it ever escapes to the outdoors”.

A declawed cat can no longer do all the things she instinctively wants to do. She can't climb, even indoors because she has lost her way of gripping and will fall, with a shocked look on her face. "Why can't I do this anymore?" she thinks. She can't scratch or groom herself properly, she can't defend herself against dogs or nasty people, so she feels insecure. Her balance is affected and she is deprived of the psychological comfort derived from scratching.

A declawed cat may become neurotic and develop psychological problems. She may resort to biting because she feels unsafe. Sometimes the claws re-grow but are deformed and may easily become infected.

Please don't get your cat declawed, its very cruel.

However there is a humane solution called [Soft Claws](#) . These are claw caps which you apply to your cat's front claws to stop her from scratching at your carpets and furnishings. Only use these if your cat never goes outside. With soft claws you can see how well your cat accepts them, and if she is upset you can remove them.

If you want to try to deter your cat from scratching before resorting to soft claws one simple way is to provide her with scratching pads or posts. You can buy a wide variety of scratching posts, including posts that are part of an elaborate condo. When you catch her scratching in the wrong place gently show her how to do it on the scratching post.

You could make your own simple scratching post, using a three foot high section of a four by four, a two foot by two foot piece of heavy plywood, and a carpet remnant. Once you have a scratching post or pad, be sure you place it right next to her favorite piece of furniture. Once she is in the habit of scratching the post, you can try moving it a bit further from the furniture, but you should do so gradually.

If having her own personal scratching post doesn't deter your cat from ruining the furnishings, try using a pet repellent spray, such as Bitter Apple, on the furniture. Of course if you have an outdoor cat the problem is simpler. He may attack the furniture but can be stopped with a repellent and so learn that scratching the trees outside is a better option.

Cat Grooming – Keep Your Cat Looking Great

Cats do not like to be dirty. Most cats spend a good part of their day licking their paws and face to stay clean and tidy. But even so, and especially if you have a long haired cat, he is going to need a bit of help.



Without brushing, a lot of loose fur will be swallowed and since hair is not easily digestible, it often forms hairballs that he will cough up on your carpet, if they don't block his intestine first.

Grooming also helps remove dirt and debris from your cat's coat so that it doesn't get all over your furnishings. And it is a great opportunity to check for fleas and ticks.

Some cats do hate to be groomed but others rather enjoy it. Of course, it is much easier to accustom your cat to brushes and combs when he is still a young kitten. Gently brush or comb over your kitten's coat, following the grain of the fur from his neck to his tail. If he begins to grow irritable, stop grooming him and play with him for a few minutes until he is relaxed. Do not groom his face or paws with the brush or comb, as most cats do not like this.

If your cat gets grumpy when you brush him try using a grooming glove. Brushing with a glove is much more gentle, more like stroking. While your cat is happily enjoying a nice, luxurious kitty massage, the glove is working to remove loose hair and debris. Your cat may not mind having his face groomed with a glove, but he may still object to having his paws groomed. Many cats also dislike having their tummy groomed.

While you are brushing your cat's coat, be sure you take the time to check out his eyes and ears. His eyes should be clear and bright, without matter in their corners. His ears should be clean and pink. Excess dirt in a cat's ears can be a sign of ear mites. These mites can actually cause the ears to shrivel up and your cat can lose his hearing, so be sure to take your little guy to the veterinarian if you suspect mites.

You should also check his teeth to be sure there is no tartar buildup. Since teeth problems can lead to serious health conditions.

If you have a long haired cat be sure to brush him at least weekly, otherwise his coat will become so matted that you may need to have him shaved. Most cats need to be sedated when being shaved since they will not tolerate the animal clippers, and this means a visit to the veterinarian. Being shaved is a stressful experience for your cat, so it is best to avoid it by keeping his coat tangle free.

The Cat Bath - How To Wash Your Cat

Everyone knows that cats absolutely hate water, so why on earth would someone want to bathe their cat? Well, although cats don't enjoy paddling in the swimming pool with their doggie pals, they still can sometimes get so dirty that there is just no other option. There is no need to bath your cat on a regular basis, just bathe him when it seems absolutely necessary. Most cats never get bathed and they keep themselves quite clean without it.

One reason you might want to bathe him regularly, if he will tolerate it, is to remove the allergens from his coat. The allergens in a cat come from his saliva which he liberally distributes all over himself at regular intervals. If you are feeling itchy you might try regular washing to see if this helps you to live with him in more comfort.

If you do need to bath him you will need two absorbent terry cloth towels, a pet safe shampoo, a pet safe conditioner, a sponge, and a sprayer attachment for your sink or tub. If you don't have a sprayer attachment, you should have a pitcher or large cup that you can use to scoop clean water over your cat's body. Ideally, you should also have a non-skid mat to help your cat feel more secure.

Place your non-skid mat in the bottom of the sink or tub. Add two to three inches of warm water and gently place your cat in the tub. Talk to him quietly and reassure him. He will most likely settle down within a few seconds. Once he is calm, begin to wet him down. If the sprayer attachment scares him too badly, you may have to pour water over him using your pitcher or cup, instead. Do not pour water on his head.

Once your cat is wet, squeeze out a palm sized dollop of pet shampoo (human shampoo is scented and could irritate his skin) and thoroughly massage it into his coat. If you use slow, calming motions, he may even relax and enjoy this part of the bath.

After the shampoo is sufficiently lathered, it is time to rinse your cat off. Be sure you get all of the shampoo residue out, as the residue can really irritate his skin if it isn't removed.

Now, work a palm sized dollop of conditioner into your cat's coat and then rinse it out. This step is optional if the cat has short hair.

Once your cat's body is clean, dampen your sponge and use it to carefully wipe down his face. Pay close attention to the area under his eyes.

Finally, wrap your cat in one of the towels and blot most of the water from his body. Replace the wet towel with your other dry towel and continue to blot his

coat dry. After the second towel is damp, your cat should be dry enough to finish the job himself.

If you have a long haired cat see if he will tolerate a hair dryer on the lowest setting. Be sure to keep the dryer moving constantly so you do not burn him. If he is scared of the drier just leave him be but keep him inside in a warm place until he dries off.

There is a video of the correct way to bathe a cat on my web site. [Bathing A Cat](#)

Cat Flea Control

Even the cleanest cats get fleas . All it takes to turn your flea-less pet into a flea bag is one friendly stray cat or dog that comes along for a visit and leaves his fleas behind. They can also be introduced into your home by people. When a person or cat walks outside, he will pick up the fleas and bring them inside. Even one flea can lay quite a few eggs. When the eggs hatch, you will have a full scale infestation.

Some people don't want to risk having fleas or ticks at all and use a flea and tick preventative before the insects even appear. Two of the most well known flea and tick preventatives for cats are Frontline and Advantix. These products both come as pre-measured liquid treatments. The treatment is applied directly to your cat's skin and works to kill fleas and ticks right away when they hop on your cat.

I have no evidence for this but I feel a bit worried about flea collars and drops. The cat is permanently coated in pesticides, which he distributes when he licks himself. Not only is he getting a dose by mouth but anyone around him is going dosed too. This can't be healthy, especially for children.

Catch flea problems early by regular grooming. To look for fleas, you should have a flea comb. Carefully comb through your cat's hair, paying close attention to the hair around his head and on his belly. Fleas like to hide around a cat's ears, eyes, and nose. They also tend to hang out in the creases where a cat's legs and body meet.

If you see specks of blackish dirt in the comb's teeth, this is evidence that fleas are hiding somewhere on your cat.

To find ticks, run your hands over your cat's body, looking for any raised spots. If you find a raised spot, check it closely to see if it has little legs, if so you have found a tick. If you try to pull a ticks off by yourself you will leave part of it in the cat, so take your cat to the vet for removal.



Cat Hairballs

Has your cat been coughing and hacking? If so, he may have hairballs. If you see slimy oval blobs on the floor, you will know that your cat has managed to dislodge one of his hairballs. However, if you just see him coughing a lot and no hairballs appear, take him to the veterinarian because his coughing could be asthma or another medical problem.

What exactly is a hairball? It is a mass of hair and indigested food that forms inside a cat's body. Because cats have little hooks on their tongues loose fur is licked off and swallowed during grooming. The fur can form a ball in his stomach instead of simply passing through his body. Since these hairballs aren't able to break down and be digested, cats often cough them up to get rid of them.

Cat Vaccinations – Protecting Your Cat

One of the most important things you can do for your cat is to be sure its health is protected. Since I am not a veterinarian and vaccinations are a controversial topic I recommend that you read the e-book book written by natural health practitioner Dr. Andrew Jones, DVM. The book is called [Veterinary Secrets Revealed](#)

He has some excellent information on vaccination and other health care measures for pets. As well, he provides hundreds of home remedies that can save you on veterinarian bills.

You can find that information here: [RESOURCES](#)

Neutering – An Important Part of Your Cat's Care

Besides reducing the number of unwanted kittens, spaying and neutering cats provides several other important benefits. Un-neutered tom cats have a tendency to roam far from home if they are outdoor cats. Both indoor and outdoor tom cats will mark every new object with their strong smelling spray. Female cats that are in heat will attract Tom cats from far and wide and they will spray on your doors. Your femal cat may howl for days while heat lasts.

Cats can be altered at quite a young age. Some humane societies will alter kittens as young as eight weeks. However, most veterinarians agree that it is healthier to alter kittens at four to five months.

Choosing a Bed for Your Cat - The Perfect Place to Cat Nap

Cats tend to decide for themselves where they will sleep but you should still provide a cozy bed for a new kitten. A kitten will usually sleep where you want him to until he gets old enough to be more independent.



Cats enjoy being able to snuggle up in a secure spot and they like to sleep in a bed raised from floor level and with sides, which is why so many of them will curl up in quite small boxes. My cat is quite large but he manages to curl up and sleep in my in-tray when I am at my computer.

You can buy all kinds of fancy beds for your cat, but there is no need to spend a lot of money. Cats are quite happy in a box or an old drawer if it is lined with a soft warm blanket.

Placing the bed in a cat friendly location will make it more appealing. Cats do not care to sleep in low places. Instead, position the bed at least a foot above floor level. Also, be sure the bed is not in an area that receives heavy traffic. If your cat feels as though he can never let down his guard and relax, he won't want to nap in his bed.

Of course, if you have several cats, you will need a napping spot for each cat. If you don't want three or four cat beds in your home, check out the kitty version of a play gym, the cat condo. The cat condo allows several cats to nap in elevated spots. To get the most value for your money look for a cat condo that has climbing areas and a place to sharpen claws in addition to napping spots.

Litter Boxes

If your cat is an indoor cat you can't avoid the litter box, no one likes to clean litter boxes. Luckily, there are several new litter box designs that make the task of changing cat litter much easier and more hygienic.

One popular design is the hooded litter box. These boxes provide privacy as well as reducing litter dust. The hooded box is ideal for a single cat, as long as the cat's owners can change the box frequently to keep it smelling clean and fresh. There are removable liners for these boxes which makes the whole process of changing the litter so much easier.

Another popular cat litter box design is the self cleaning litter box. This box is ideal for families with multiple cats, as cats do not like to use dirty litter boxes. The rake removes soiled litter into a removable receptacle and leaves the box fresh and clean. You can easily discard the dirty litter without having to do anything more than pulling out the receptacle and throwing the litter away.

If a kitten has not been housetrained when you get it don't fret. It is fairly easy to teach a kitten to use a litter box because they naturally want to bury their excreta. The most important thing to do is to position the litter box in the right place and keep it extremely clean. Litter boxes should never be placed next to your cat's sleeping or eating spots or they will be ignored.

To teach your kitten what the box is for, begin by placing her in the box and raking your fingers through the clean litter. Your kitten may just decide to start using the box right away. If so, praise her lavishly. If she simply hops out, play with her a few minutes and then place her back in the box. Repeat this procedure several times, but don't overdo it. You can also try raking your kitten's front paws backward and forward in the litter to give her the right idea.

About ten or fifteen minutes after each meal place your kitten in the litter box. If she uses the box, praise her. When she is sleeping, keep an eye on her and take her to the litter box when she wakes up.

If your cat doesn't use the litter box, don't scold her, it doesn't help. She will just become angry or scared of you if you do. Never rub her nose in her mess. She doesn't understand this and it is simply cruel. Instead, place the box in the spot where she most frequently has accidents and encourage her to use it. Eventually, just like children, they all get the message.

Collars and Leashes

While almost everyone walks their dog, few people walk their cats. However, cats can learn to walk on a leash. In fact, there are collars, harnesses, and leashes designed just for cats.

Unlike dog collars, cat collars are not created so that they can be used with a cat leash. The shape of a cat's head makes it too easy for a collar attached to a leash to pop right off.

A cat collar is used to hold an ID tag in case your cat strays and if it is allowed outside a little bell can be attached so that he gives the birds a warning when he is about to pounce! This doesn't always work, although it is worth a try. I have heard of a cat who learned how to hold the bell in her mouth to stop it ringing, and my own cat has managed to kill at least one bird when wearing his bell.



We have finally managed to teach Alfie that birds are not wanted but mice and rats are OK. I always made a big fuss about his bird offerings and took them off him, often still alive. After a while he just stopped bringing birds in. He still brings in the rodents, usually only dead ones!

Cat harnesses are designed to stay securely on a cat, even when the cat is on a leash. You can buy a simple nylon harness for your cat or you can find more deluxe models that look like padded vests. As long as the harness is completely adjustable, it should work well.

Cat leashes can be standard leashes or retractable models. Whichever type of leash you choose, be sure that it is lightweight enough to allow your cat to move easily under its weight. Retractable leashes are ideal for people who want to let their cats explore their surroundings in a park or other traffic safe area, but want to keep the cats close by when they are walking to and from their homes.

To accustom your cat to walking on a leash, you should not use the same techniques you use to train your dog. Cats do not do well with negative correction, so giving a quick tug on the leash when they do not stay at your side will not teach them to heel. Instead, praise your cat when he does what you want and ignore him when he does the wrong thing. Although you can teach your cat to tolerate a leash, don't expect him to heel on command.

The easiest way to teach your cat to use a leash is to start when he is a young kitten of eight to ten weeks old. Place his harness on him and allow him to walk about completely unrestrained. After a few days, add the leash. Be sure that you do not apply any pressure.

Once your cat is used to the leash, you can pick it up and teach him that it is ok for you to be on the other end. Gently apply pressure to the leash and call your cat to you. Praise him when he responds. Eventually, he will become used to following you when he is on his leash.

The End

[More cat information including videos](#)



I hope this short eBook has given you some helpful ideas about choosing and caring for a kitten and a cat.

Links to more information on looking after cats can be found in the [Resources](#) page below.

RESOURCES

1. [Dr. Andrew Jones' Inner Circle Membership](#) What you can expect from a membership with Dr. Andrew Jones' Inner Circle.

- a. **Regular access to Dr Andrew Jones** - you can directly ask me your pet health questions on the membership forum
- b. **A HUGE monthly newsletter**, sent to you via email
- c. **A monthly audio "expert" interview**, about healing your pet at home naturally, in MP3 format that you can download directly from the membership site
- d. **Instant Access to hundreds of pages of pet health and pet care content:** a huge database of pet health questions that I have previously answered (well over 200 questions answered) over **two hundred articles** on current pet health and behavior issues, with both conventional and natural solutions
- e. **Veterinary Secrets Revealed, the Online Edition:** holistic solutions to 60 common pet illnesses, with over 1000 natural solutions in total.



Trial membership only \$9.97 for the first 30 DAYS.
Think how much you will save on expensive vet visits!

2. Or if you don't want membership you might want to check out the eBook [Veterinary Secrets Revealed](#).



"Veterinary Secrets Revealed is the definitive manual for solving your pet health problems with natural, at-home remedies..."

"No pet owner should be without this book." Dr. Jeff Serfas,
Forestburg Animal Hospital

[Veterinary Secrets Revealed](#)

[Dr. Liesa Pierson DVM](#) Learn how to make your own cat food.

[Declawing .com](#) This is the site of Dr. Christine Schelling DVM

[Cats & Cat Health:](#) My Blog on cat health topics and lots more about little felines. Check out the collection of YouTube cat videos and join in by leaving comments, stories about your own cats, or asking questions.