



PEEL ANIMAL RESCUE SOCIETY

BRINGING A NEW KITTEN HOME

♥ A LOVED CAT would live longer!

Going to a new home is one of the most stressful and frightening experiences in a cat's or kitten's life. As far as she is concerned, she is totally alone in a completely strange environment. She will find you and your home strange and frightening. If you follow a few simple rules, you can minimize the stress, help your new friend adjust and accept her new life more easily.

THINGS TO BUY

Before you bring your kitten, home make sure you have all the necessary items it will need.

- Litter tray & cat litter:
- Scratching post,
- Food/water bowls:
- Cat carrier for those trips to the vet.
- Toys
- Cat bed:
- Kitten food - Both DRY & CANNED

KITTEN PROOF YOUR HOME

One of the simplest ways to kitten proof a home is to look at things from the perspective of the kitten. If it looks like fun, food, a good place to nap or an escape route, the kitten will head right for it. Use these tips to help kitten proof your home.

- ♥ Keep medications, cleaners, chemicals, and laundry supplies on high shelves.
- ♥ Keep trash cans covered or inside a latched cabinet. Check for and block any small spaces, nooks, or holes inside cabinetry or behind washer/dryer units.
- ♥ Make sure your kitten hasn't jumped into the dryer before you turn it on.
- ♥ Tie up loose electrical cords or conceal them in hard plastic or rubber runners purchased at the hardware store.
- ♥ Make sure the toilet seat and lid are closed. The toilet can be a popular watering hole for a cat. small kitten could fall in and drown.
- ♥ Small objects such as coins, pins, needles, rubber bands, paper clips, staples, nails, screws, yarn, thread, dental floss, earrings and other small jewellery, bells and small balls, left lying around can lodge in your cat's digestive tract if swallowed. Keep them safely out of your cat's reach.
- ♥ Windows. To keep your cat from accidentally falling or escaping through an open window, fasten window screens securely.

SETTLING IN

IMPORTANT

Before the kitten arrives home, make sure you have set up a quiet and comfortable room for your kitten. Put a litterbox, scratching post, bed, and food and water, toys in this room. It is necessary to make sure the food & water bowls need to be kept as far away from the litter tray as possible

Bring her in, close the door, and then open the carrier. Being in her own room will allow her to get use to the sounds and smells of her new home. Later, this room will give her a safe refuge.

She may cry when left alone. You can comfort her by talking quietly and petting her. If she doesn't seem too scared, you can pick her up and hold her on your lap. It is best to let her come to you. If she is timid, just sit quietly and read a book. Give her time to approach you on her own

Your kitten will be scared and hiding for a while. This is completely normal behaviour & needs to be met with sensitivity & understanding. The worst thing you can do is rush the situation. Allow her to come out when she is ready. **Never force your new friend from this safe haven before she is ready.** If you do, she may hide under the furniture for a long while.

Warmth

Young kittens need to stay warm, but their bodies are too small to retain body heat well. That is why they like to cuddle up together or curl up under your chin or in your lap to sleep. Kittens younger than about 10 weeks need a warm place to be, such as under an incandescent lamp or in a warm, lined box or kitty bed. This is especially important if you have only one kitten.

Children

Small children can be especially frightening to your cat. It is **very important** that they leave her alone during her adjustment period. Children should be allowed to visit the cat only when supervised. You can tell them, "We are going to visit the kitty now. We must be very quiet and gentle and move slowly so we don't frighten her. We want her to learn to trust us." Explain to your children that kittens & cats should never be disturbed if they are sleeping or eating.

Other Pets

If you have other pets, it is important to do the "introductions" slowly. The introduction needs to be slow & at the animal's pace. Some pets will become firm friends almost immediately; however it is common for resident pets to be upset at the arrival of a new pet for weeks or even months.

“BRINGING A NEW KITTEN HOME”

FEEDING

Mothers usually begin to wean their kittens at about 4 weeks of age. By 8 weeks of age, the kittens are eating solid food. Older kittens who are still with their mothers may occasionally nurse, but this is more for comfort and reassurance than for nutrition.

Do not give your kitten cow's milk - it can make them sick and give them diarrhea.

Water. Keep clean, fresh water available to your kitten at all times. The bowl should be low enough for the kitten to be able to drink from it easily. Some kittens enjoy playing in the water and even tipping over the bowl, so you may need a heavy bowl. Place the bowl where it won't get dirtied by litter.

Food. It's best to feed your kitten both dry food and canned food. Be sure to choose food which is designed for kittens. They require a diet which is especially rich in protein, calcium, and other nutrients. Cat food that is for adults is not sufficient. Your young cat will need the enhanced kitten food until he or she is a year old. Young kittens need to eat every few hours, because their tummies are so small. It's good to have a bowl of dry food available for them to munch on whenever they wish.

LITTER & LITTER BOXES

Kittens will instinctively use the litter box as they get older, but their mother also helps to teach them. Make sure that a litter box with sides low enough for the kittens to get in and out is easily accessible. Use regular litter, not the clumping kind! Small kittens can lick themselves, swallow the clumping litter, and suffer dangerous blockages in their digestive track! Once the kitten is 3 months old, they can safely use the clumping litter. Keep the litter box clean - this encourages the kitten to develop good litter box habits.

BATHS

Kittens will instinctively clean themselves, but the mother helps to develop this behavior too. You can help keep your little kitten by cleaning him or her gently with a damp washrag. Often they need to have their little rear-ends cleaned! This also helps to bond your kitten to you, since you are acting in the role of "mommy". They generally do not need real baths unless they have gotten especially dirty or if they need flea baths.

PETTING

You can help your kitten become a friendly, well socialized cat by spending plenty of quality time with him or her. He will like to be stroked gently around the ears and under the chin. Be sure to pet her all over her body, so she gets used to being touched even on her paws and tummy. They enjoy being touched gently by you and will grow to enjoy your smell and your voice. Speak in a low voice - they are afraid of loud noises!

PLAYING

Play time is very important to a kitten. They learn to socialize, develop physical skills, get exercise, and have fun! Kittens have a great time playing with each other - rough housing, stalking, pouncing, chasing, and grooming each other. Young kittens don't know they are hurting you when they grab at or bite your hand, or run up your pant leg, so be patient and forgiving. If you have just one kitten, you will be the focus of all of his playmaking attention!

You can "train" your kitten not to bite or scratch by giving a high-pitched yelp whenever she gets too enthusiastic. This is how kittens let each other know that the play has gotten too rough. An idea which can help save your arms from scratches is provide a "wrestle buddy" for your kitten - a stuffed toy or old sock filled with soft cloth or socks - that they can be free to sink their little teeth and claws into. Use it to rough house with your kitten and she won't become accustomed to using you as her scratching toy!

SCRATCHING

Your kitten will start to scratch at things at an early age. This is the time to start training her! Provide a small scratching post or flat scratching pad and keep it wherever she usually plays. Encourage her to use it by enticing her with a toy or with catnip. Give her praise when she uses it, and give a loud yell ("CLAWS!") when she scratches the wrong thing. A loud voice is generally all it takes to communicate the error - don't hit her or squirt her with water. You can also start trimming her claws. Wait until she is sleepy and relaxed. Start by trimming just a few of her claws, and don't force it if she starts to resist. Pet her and tell her good she is! She will soon get used to it, and it will become a lifelong good habit.

IMPORTANT

It's important for you to neuter/spay the adopted kitten. A female cat who gets out even just ONCE can get pregnant easily. **For one UNSPAVED female cat, it can end up with 420,000 DESCENDENTS in 7 YEARS!!!** By

neutering/spaying your cat, you can make a difference in reducing the number of killings of thousands of homeless cats in the pounds.

NEUTERING a male cat will prevent:

- **Spraying/Urine marking**
- **Aggression/Fighting with other cats**
- **Roaming for females**
- **Testicular/prostate cancer**

SPAYING a female cat will prevent:

- **Annoying repeated heat cycles – rolling/yowling/urine marking episodes every 3 or 4 weeks.**
- **Birth of unwanted kittens**
- **Mammary tumours or Pyometras**

A FIXED cat will be happier and healthier!