

Adopting a Shelter Cat WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Congratulations on your new kitten(s) or cat(s)! Thank you for choosing to adopt your new furry friend.

We hope you found your adoption experience fun and rewarding. Remember, owning cats is long-term commitment and should not to be taken lightly. You will be the provider of your cats care, food, training and attention. Don't forget to set aside money for yearly vet care that may add up to hundreds of dollars. Be prepared for the shedding, scratching, chewing, and all other behaviors that may come with owning a cat.

Please refer to the following information for helpful tips and advice regarding your new kitten or cat:

YOUR NEW PET'S TRANSITION TO THEIR NEW HOME

Cats are territorial animals. It can take weeks and even months for a cat to adapt fully to their new home. Remember, cats being taken out of their environment (their territory) and brought into a new and more stressful territory (the shelter) then eventually moved into a big space that you will call their new home...is all very stressful. It can be sensory overload.

There are many things you can do as owners to make their move from the shelter to your home the quickest and easiest. Here are some tips and tricks to ensure a happy, healthy, and smooth transition:

- 🐾 **PRIVACY** – this is the first thing you should to set up for your new cat. As much as you may want to play or hold your cat right away, it is important to give your new cat quiet privacy from the moment you bring him/her home.
 - *Choose a room a small room* (bathroom works great) away from any scary noises or machinery that may turn on and off. Be sure any resident animals are not able to access this room. Even if your resident animals and new cat have lived with other animals previously, be sure to wait at least a week or two before you let them meet face-to-face.
 - Set up your cat's new *litter box, food, water, toys, and a cozy spot* in their private area. You will want to leave their cardboard carrying box in the room with them. This not only gives them something familiar but it also gives them a safe place to hide. They will hide even in the small private area. This is normal for the first few days.
 - Give your cat a *scratching post*—even if she/he is declawed! Scratching allows cats to spread their scent and will relieve stress. It's a very important part to a cat's life!

- 🐾 **HUMAN INTERACTIONS WITH THE NEW CAT**
 - *Do not reach for the cat* – let the cat come to you if it wishes to do so. If it doesn't approach you, come back in fifteen minutes. Don't try to console the scared cat by holding it. That will only scare the cat more. Instead, try sitting in the room with the cat and read a book.
 - Let the *cat come out of its hiding spot*, if it wishes to do so, to explore and sniff you. Talk softly and

give your new cat a delicious treat. A great way to bond with your new cat is to brush him/her softly if the cat allows it.

- Do not be surprised if your new cat doesn't eat for the first few days. It is common for re-homed cats to show no interest in eating. It is okay to *offer a little bit of high-value treats* or food (like pieces of shrimp, freeze dried salmon treats, or nutritious wet cat food) mixed in the cat's food. That's also a great way for your cat to learn its new home and owner(s) are a great place to be.
- *Never punish your cat for fearful behavior.* If the cat hisses, growls, or attempts to bite – that's your cue it's had enough or is not ready to be social. Simply leave the cat be.
- If you see in your visits to the cat in its private room that the cat is openly offering affection, eating and not hiding, you can *open the door and give him/her one more room to explore.* Do this slowly until you have introduced the cat to all the rooms in his new home.

🐾 STEPS IN INTRODUCING YOUR NEW CAT TO ALL RESIDENT PETS

1. Cats are very territorial. It is important to never force face-to-face introductions. This is a slow process, and forcing the issue will result in a delay in a positive introduction. Be patient and *wait at least 12 days* to do a proper introduction.
2. Once your new cat has spent some time in its new and private room, take her/his bedding and *allow your resident pets to investigate it.* Do the same with your resident pet'(s) bedding and your new cat.
DO NOT ALLOW PETS TO INTERACT WITH EACH OTHER YET.
3. Now, you can do face-to-face introductions *one pet at a time.*

****WAIT AT
LEAST 12
DAYS BEFORE
INTRODUCING
YOUR NEW
CAT TO ANY
RESIDING
FAMILY PETS****



**Hall
Monitor**

TIPS AND REMINDERS:

- Introductions are safest when all pets are showing interest in one another and none are trying to hide or act in an aggressive manner. Initially, for safety, you may want to set up and use a barrier, such as a baby gate.
- Do not ever restrain cats when they meet for the first time. Expect some hissing, growling, spitting and swatting. Do not interfere in the introduction unless you fear injury to your animals.
- Do not let your dog approach your new cat. Let your new cat make the approach.
- Dogs should be kept on a loose leash and in a sitting position. Start across the room. Reward non-fearful and positive behaviors for both pets by using treats and/or praise.
- **Do not allow your new cat to be around your resident pets without supervision until you have had several opportunities to observe and are comfortable with their interactions.**
- Always make sure your cat has a way of getting away from other pets by providing plenty places of high (cat trees or window ledges) that are inaccessible to your dog.
- It is very important that your cat have access to its own food, water, and its litter box in an area where your resident dog cannot access. Using baby gates that your cat can get over or under but your dog cannot. Be sure your new cat can still easily access its litter box.
- A general rule of thumb for the appropriate number of litter boxes is: one for every cat in the home **plus one**. There should be a box on each level of your home. Cats can sometimes bully each other, and if this happens in the litter box, your cat may not want to return to that box.
- If you have a kitten, elderly, or overweight cat you may want to provide a litter box with low sides to better suit their accessibility needs.

**Animal behavior questions? Contact our FREE Behavior Helpline:
www.nehumanesociety.org/behaviorhelp or 402-905-3421 or bhelp@nehumanesociety.org**

Stress Management

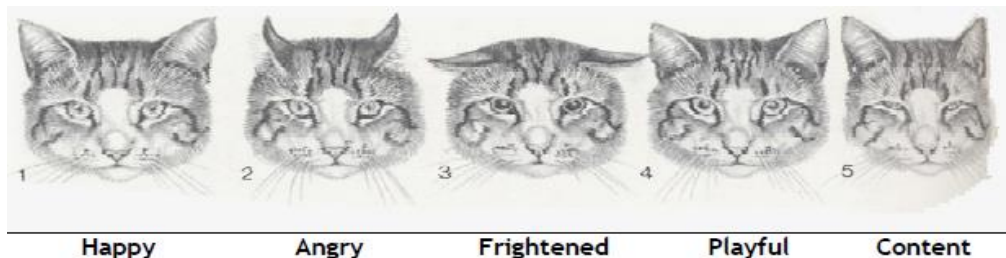
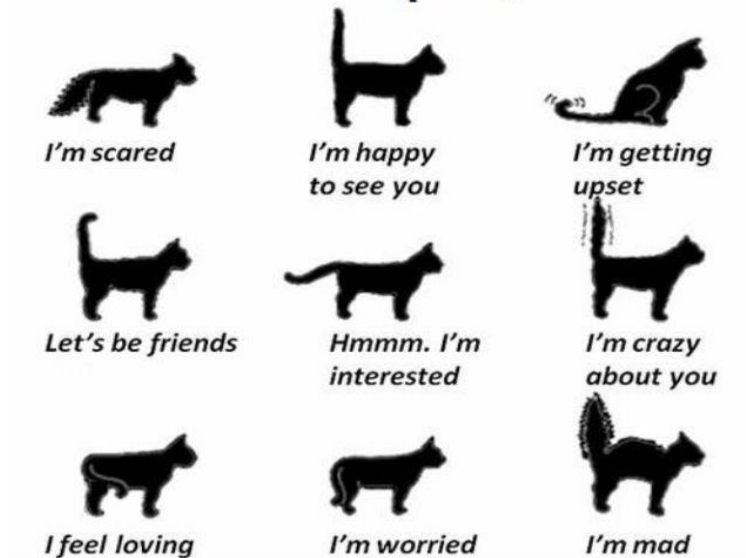
HELP YOUR CAT FEEL WELCOMED AND RELAXED IN ITS NEW HOME

- Provide vertical and horizontal scratching posts regardless if the cat is declawed or not. All cats must scratch. It is a necessity that helps relieve stress.
- Cats need areas to rest that are variable heights. These do not need to be store-bought, and you probably already have items your cat would enjoy using. Place a bed or homemade cat bed on a dresser. If your cat enjoys cat nip, you can place some in the bed to entice him/her there. The backs of furniture also work well.
- Open a blind or curtain by a window to allow the cat to see the outdoors. Looking out a window is like watching T.V for cats.
- Use a Feliway® diffuser or spray. This synthetic pheromone is calming to many cats. Place the diffuser in a room your resident cat frequently uses. You can use the spray on beds, scratching posts. etc.
- Use a pheromone calming collar. This has the same pheromone component that the diffuser or spray does, but it is a collar that lasts 30 days.
- Use a Thundershirt. The cat Thundershirt applies gentle, constant pressure to the torso. This pressure has a dramatic calming effect for cats if they are anxious or fearful. See more information about this at <http://www.thundershirtforcats.com>
 - The Feliway, Pheromone Collar, and Thundershirt are all available at the Nebraska Humane Society's retail store, Animal Outfitters.

Cat Language

LEARN ABOUT WHAT YOUR CAT MAY BE SAYING

Cat Tail Speak



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Proper Litter Box Set-Up

FOLLOW THESE INSTRUCTIONS WHEN SETTING UP YOUR LITTER BOXES

🐾 SIZE

- Be sure the litter box is 1½ times bigger than the cat's current size.
- Under-the-bed storage bins can serve as a great litter box.

🐾 LITTER

- Litter should be *unscented* and *scoopable*.
- NHS Retail store sells a wonderful inexpensive unscented scoopable litter.
- Use 1 to 3 inches of litter. No more, no less.

🐾 LITTER BOX EXTRAS

- No lids. Cats do not have a 360-degree escape route in a litter box with a lid.
- No liners. Cats do not like the feel of liners.

🐾 QUANTITY

- For every cat there is in the house is how many litter boxes you should have, plus one. So, if you have two cats you should have at least three litter boxes.
- One litter box should be provided for each level of the residence.

🐾 LOCATION

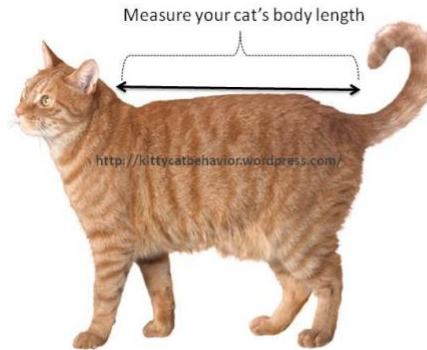
- Set-up the litter box(es) in a quiet and private area. Avoid areas with loud machinery that makes unpredictable noises such as a laundry room or in a basement near the water heater.
- If there are multiple litter boxes in the residence, be sure to spread the boxes apart from one another.
- Be sure the litter box is in an area a dog cannot get to. Use baby gates that the cat can go under or jump over but the dog can't, if needed.
- Be sure the cat food and water is not close to the litter box.
- Don't move the litter box around. Cats do best with a consistent environment and routine.

🐾 CLEANLINESS

- Scoop the litter at least twice a day.
- Clean out the litter box completely at least every two weeks: dumping all the litter and rinsing with mild dish soap. Never use bleach or powerful cleaning chemicals. Never use citrus scented cleaning agents, ammonia, or pine cleaning agents. These odors are offensive to cats.
- Urine and feces odor will seep into the plastic permanently. Purchase a new litter box every 6 months.
- If your cat flings litter out of the litter box when covering, simply put a washer pan or an upside down lid under the litter box to catch excess litter.

What size litter box is right for your cat?

1. Measure the length of your cat's BODY from neck to tail.
2. The length of the litter box should be at least 1 ½ times this measurement.
3. If you feel you *must* have a covered box, you will need to add 2 more inches to the length, and the height must also be 1 ½ times the length of the cat's.



Example:

Body = 12", so ½ body = 6"
12 + 6 = 18
Pan length minimum = 18"

Body length	Pan length
6"	9"
12"	18"
16"	24"
20"	30"

* Other considerations:
Low sides for older cats,
extra width for plus sized
kitties.



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