



New Kitten Packet

Information include:

Vaccines

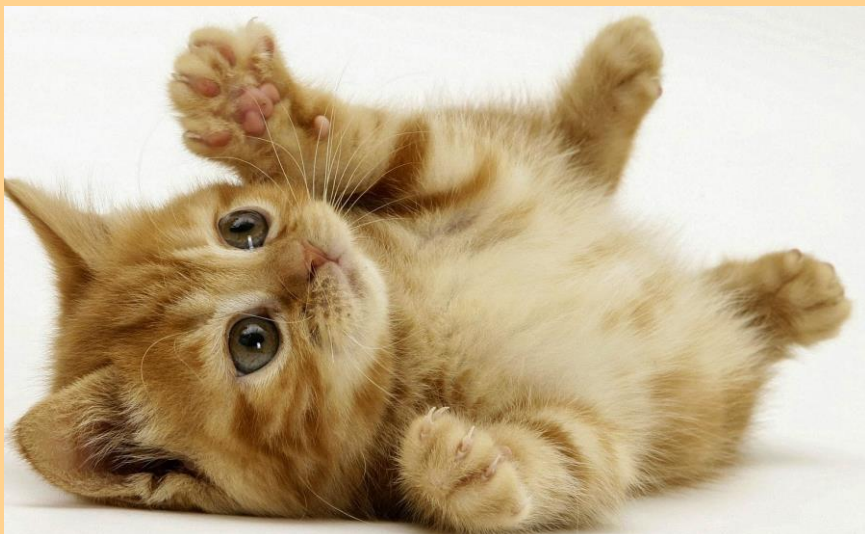
Litterbox Care

Destructive Behaviors

Alternatives to Declawing

Internal Parasites & Deworming

Socialization & Enrichment



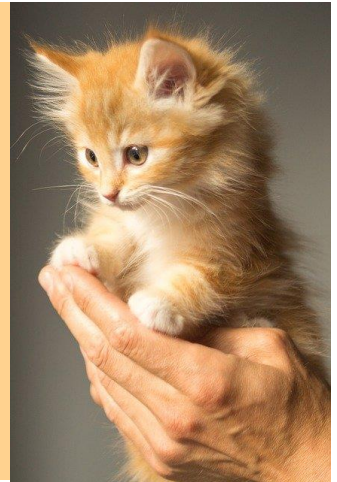
Vaccination Schedule

CORE VACCINES- REQUIRED/RECOMMENDED:

- FVRCP-Viral rhinotracheitis, Calicivirus, Panleukopenia
- Rabies- 1 year or 3 year (ONLY VACCINE REQUIRED BY LAW)
- (The 3-year vaccine is only available AFTER a one-year vaccine & in 1 year post vaccination period)

NON –CORE VACCINES- OPTIONAL?BASED ON RISK:

- Feline Leukemia Virus- (FELV alone or FVRCP/FELV)



Indian Ridge Vaccine Protocols:

Kittens under 6 months of age:

Suggested: Test for FIV/FelV

- 2-3 sets of kitten vaccines (FVRCP)
- And Rabies 1 year, Bordatella, and other non-core vaccines at appropriate ages

Rabies vaccine only given after 16 weeks of age

Then, start once yearly vaccine schedule from date of last booster shot

Kittens older than 6 months of age with no prior vaccine history:

- 2 sets of kitten vaccines (FVRCP or FVRCP/FelV)
- Rabies vaccines, and other non-core vaccines
- Then, go to once yearly vaccination from date of last vaccine booster

Cats 1 year or older:

- FVRCP
- Rabies (1 year or 3 year)
- Other non-core vaccines based on risk (FeLV/FVRCP)

Cats boarding or hospitalized must have FVRCP & Rabies before entering the hospital.

Feline Behavior Problems: Aggression

Aggression, defined as hostile or violent behavior intended to dominate or intimidate another individual, is a fairly common behavioral problem in cats.

Its causes in cats can be complex, both in terms of triggers and targets, making it challenging to find strategies to eliminate aggressive feline behavior.

The consequences of aggressive behavior in cats can be significant, ranging from injuries to other cats and people to the surrender of aggressive cats to shelters. A recent study reported that 27 percent of cats relinquished to shelters for behavioral reasons were surrendered for aggression. Given these high stakes, it is important that cat owners understand the cause of their pet's aggressive behavior in order to develop a plan to successfully intervene.

Regardless of their cause, recognizing the signs that a cat is fearful or aggressive can help prevent injury to pets and people. These cues can be separated into two categories: those observed in the face and head and those expressed by body posture.



Signs of aggression include dilated pupils, ears flattened backward on the head, tail held erect with hairs raised, and an arched back. Signs of fear include dilated pupils, ears flattened and held outward, whiskers flattened or pressed downward onto the face, tail closely wrapped or tucked under the body, and head held upward while lying prone (Figures 1 and 2).

There are a number of different types of aggression that cats can display, and in some cases, a cat may display more than one type at a time. Here are some general principles for managing all types of feline aggression:

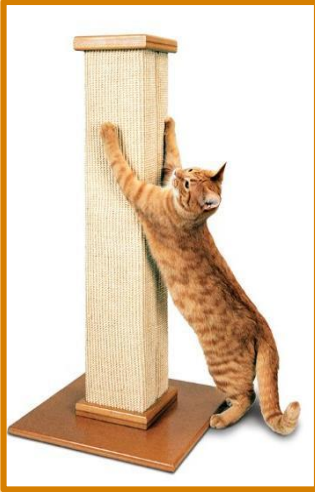
- Early intervention is best.
- Any type of physical punishment can increase a cat's fear or anxiety and worsen aggression.
- Medications may help, but only in combination with behavioral and/or environmental modification.
- Recognizing aggression and startling an aggressive cat without physical contact is usually effective.
- Avoid situations that you know make a cat aggressive.
- Separate cats that act aggressively toward each other and reintroduce slowly with positive reinforcement, as described in the Territorial Aggression section.
- Food treats are excellent positive enforcers of non-aggressive behavior.
- Aggression that cannot be managed using the techniques outlined in this brochure may require consultation with a veterinary behaviorist. It is important to use the information presented here in close collaboration with your veterinarian.

The first step in managing an aggressive cat is to ensure that there is no medical reason for aggressive behavior. Diseases such as hyperthyroidism, osteoarthritis, dental disease, and central nervous system problems may cause aggression, so consult a veterinarian before attempting to manage aggressive cats through behavioral and/or environmental modification.

Once a veterinarian has ruled out medical problems, identifying the type of aggression is key to understanding its cause and to developing a plan to intervene.

Feline Behavior Problems: Destructive Behavior

Many owners complain that their cats scratch furniture and carpets, chew on fabric, or munch on houseplants. These destructive behaviors not only destroy valuable items, but may also harm a cat's health. One common misconception is that cats are "out for revenge" when they destroy household items, but these behaviors are usually part of normal investigation and play and, fortunately, can most commonly be managed with an appropriate plan and patience.



Scratching

Cats that scratch your favorite sofa or expensive drapes are not on a mission to destroy your home, but rather wish to satisfy certain needs. Scratching is largely a marking behavior that deposits scent from special glands on the cat's paws into his territory and removes the translucent covering, or sheath, from the claws. The scratch marks and claw sheaths left behind may also be displays of confidence.

Because scratching is an innate behavior like grooming or burying waste, it can be difficult to stop. However, cats can be taught to scratch on more appropriate objects like scratching posts. The following three tactics will help you redirect your cat's scratching behavior.

Identify scratching preferences

To find out what your cat prefers to scratch on, observe her carefully. Does she prefer carpets, drapes, wood, or some other surface? Does she scratch vertically, with her paws stretched out above her head, or does she prefer horizontal surfaces? Once you have figured out your cat's preferred target materials and orientation, you can buy a scratching post that suits her needs.

Provide items that match scratching preference

Scratching posts of all shapes, sizes, and textures are available at most pet stores. A carpet-covered post would be a good choice for cats that scratch carpets. If your cat prefers couches and other nubby surfaces, choose a post covered in sisal or some other rope-like material. The scratching post should also match your cat's preferred scratching orientation. A cat that climbs and scratches on drapes would probably prefer a post tall enough for a long stretch, such as those that mount on a wall or door. However, a cat that likes the horizontal motion of scratching on a carpet might be more likely to use a flattened cardboard box, or a log placed on its side (Figure 1).

Some owners get creative and build their own scratching posts and kitty activity centers. You can cover pieces of wood with carpet, fabric, sisal, or other materials, then nail them together to create a "cat tree" with climbing perches. This will help keep your cat entertained and satisfy her need to scratch. Any scratching post you buy or build should be sturdy enough that it does not topple over during use, and should be at least as tall as your cat standing on her hind legs with front legs outstretched.

Redirect your cat's scratching behavior by placing the post next to an area your cat likes to scratch. It can then be gradually moved to a location of your choice. If your cat scratches in several locations, provide a post near each one. Take your cat to the new scratching post and reward her with treats, strokes, and praise for using it. You can also entice your cat with treats or catnip placed on or around the post. Do not discard the used scratching post when it looks ragged and worn—that means the post is well used and is serving its intended purpose!

Make unacceptable targets unavailable or less attractive

The only guaranteed way to stop your cat from scratching a given area or object is to restrict access. However, if this is not practical, there are booby traps you can set up to discourage scratching. Build a tower of plastic cups that topples over when bumped to startle your cat when she begins to scratch. Covering items with blankets, sheets of plastic, or double-sided tape may also deter scratching. A more expensive tactic is an indoor fence that delivers a mild, harmless shock when your cat crosses a boundary.

Because scratching has a scent-marking component, cats are more likely to re-scratch areas that already have their scent. To help break this cycle, try using an odor neutralizer to deodorize these areas.

You can further minimize scratching damage by regularly trimming your cat's nails (see illustration in Figure 2 and <https://goo.gl/AqTvkH> for a series of demonstration videos) and/or by applying plastic nail caps that can be glued over your cat's claws. These should only be applied to cats that allow you to handle and manipulate their paws. While wearing these caps, your cat can go through the motions of scratching, but will cause no damage. Replace the caps every six to 12 weeks.

In general, cats do not respond well to punishment because they see no link between the punishment and the "crime." Punishment only teaches your cat to fear you. Worse, it may lead to aggression. Yelling, squirting a water gun, or startling your cat with a loud noise when he scratches teaches him that your presence, rather than the act of scratching, brings punishment. If your cat is punished for scratching only when you are present, he will simply learn to scratch when you are not there. Effective deterrents to scratching, such as the "tower of cups" booby trap mentioned earlier, are consistent, immediate, and are less likely to result in a cat associating a negative stimulus with its owner.



Declawing is an elective and highly controversial surgical procedure that is the topic of considerable debate among cat owners and veterinary professionals. Despite its name, declawing is actually an amputation of the bones at the tips of the paws, not a simple removal of the nails. Like any other surgical procedure, declawing carries the risk of anesthetic complications, infection, bleeding, and, in rare cases, more long-term problems. Declawing will not curb your cat's desire to scratch, but will prevent the damage resulting from the behavior. Declawed cats should never be allowed outside, as they are less able to climb trees or to defend themselves. Thoughtful consultation with your veterinarian is recommended if you are considering this procedure for your cat. Declawing should be considered only as an **absolute** last resort when all other strategies are unsuccessful, and only in cases in which a cat's scratching would necessitate removal from the home.

Fabric Chewing and Sucking

Fabric chewing and sucking is relatively rare in cats. It may be a comfort-seeking behavior, or it may fulfill a desire to play and investigate. Kittens commonly chew as they explore, and although most outgrow this behavior, some do it for life. It is most commonly seen in Burmese and Siamese cats, which suggests a genetic predisposition comparable to obsessive-compulsive disorders in humans.

Wool is often the fabric of choice, and a cat with a serious chewing habit can destroy sweaters, socks, blankets, pillows, and other valuable items. More importantly, this behavior can be harmful to your cat's health. Bits of swallowed fabric can cause life-threatening gastrointestinal obstructions. In addition, cats that chew fabric may also chew on dangerous items like electrical cords, twist ties, or even pins and needles.

Prevent access to unacceptable targets/offer alternatives

If necessary, hide all valuable and dangerous chewable objects, leaving out a few non-valuable fabrics for your cat to chew on—so long as he does not swallow too much. Also, try offering your cat alternatives such as cat-safe rubber toys scented with fish oil or even dry cat food. If you choose the latter, make sure that the dry food used is part of your cat's calculated daily caloric intake (i.e. that this does not result in overfeeding).

Prevent boredom

A cat that habitually chews on inappropriate objects may need other diversions. A home-built or purchased "kitty condo" with crawl spaces, perches, or hanging catnip toys will help occupy your cat's time. Additionally, try to increase the amount of time you spend playing with him by dangling ribbons or tossing walnuts or ping-pong balls. You can help meet your cat's need to forage by putting a large ball in the food bowl, or by providing toys that deliver treats when moved or scratched.

Make unacceptable targets less attractive

Spray bad-tasting commercial pet repellents on fabrics to deter chewing. It is best to rotate the positions and types of items sprayed so your cat learns that all fabric tastes bad. Your cat should not be able to predict by smelling which items are sprayed, so choose a repellent without a foul odor. Finally, in severe cases, your veterinarian may prescribe medications that decrease your cat's desire to chew or suck on inappropriate targets.

Houseplant Chewing

Cats that chew on houseplants are usually indoor cats with little access to grass or other greens. Cats may chew on plants as part of their normal investigation and play, or they may simply be craving vegetable matter in their diets. While most plants are harmless, several can be deadly.

These include:

Caladium (Caladium spp.)
Dumb cane (Dieffenbachia spp.)
English ivy (Hedera helix)
Lilies (Lilium spp.)
Mistletoe (Phoradendron spp.)
Oleander (Nerium oleander)
Philodendron (Philodendron spp.)
Poinsettia (Euphorbia spp.)

Please be aware that this is neither a complete list nor a list of the most common poisonous plants. Consult your veterinarian or local poison control center for more information.

Prevent access/provide alternatives

The only way to guarantee protection for both your houseplants and your cat is to block access to the plants. If your cat craves vegetable matter in her diet, you can provide alternatives, such as oat grass, catnip, and catmint, although she may still continue to snack on houseplants. You can also try adding lettuce or parsley to her food bowl, or switching to a cat food with a higher fiber content.

Make unacceptable targets less attractive

Houseplants can be made less attractive by spraying the leaves with a commercial pet repellent, or spraying water, then sprinkling them with cayenne pepper. The odor of mothballs in the soil may also keep your cat away. Alternatively, the "tower of cups" booby trap placed around the pot can startle your cat when she begins to chew.

Conclusion

Unfortunately, some innate, normal cat behaviors become destructive within the confines of a house. As cat owners, we need to find a balance between protecting our valuables and our cats' health, while still satisfying our cats' needs. In some cases, consultation with a veterinarian or veterinary behaviorist may be helpful to address destructive behavior and to devise management strategies that will enable you and your cat to live in peace and good health.

Types of Aggression

Cats can display aggression for a number of reasons. Determining the cause of a cat's aggressive behavior is important, as different types of aggression may be managed differently. The following are general categories of feline aggression and how they can each be addressed.

Play Aggression

Young cats and kittens that were not raised with littermates, or that lack opportunities to play most commonly show play aggression. Learning appropriate play is an important part of a cat's socialization, and this normally occurs during time spent with littermates. Cats learn that they are biting or scratching too hard when their littermates stop playing or retaliate. Cats raised alone during their early lives may not learn this important lesson.

Cats that are about to engage in play aggression will often thrash their tails back and forth, have their ears pinned to the tip of their head, and have dilated pupils. They may stalk their target, whether animal or human, and will often pounce from a hiding place as the target passes by.

To intervene in play aggression, first determine if there is a pattern to when and where aggressive behavior occurs. If so, preempt the aggression by distracting the cat with play or denying access to places that encourage the behavior, such as under the bed if the cat hides there before pouncing. A bell on a breakaway collar may be helpful in signaling a cat's whereabouts prior to and during aggressive behavior.

The use of noise deterrents within a few seconds of aggressive behavior, such as a blast from a can of compressed air or a person hissing, may be helpful in startling a cat and redirecting his attention. The goal is not to scare the cat, but to distract him and refocus his attention. Never physically punish, or even touch a cat, during these times, as this may cause a cat to become fearful of people or may be interpreted as play, which may inadvertently reward the aggressive behavior. Walking away and ignoring a cat engaged in play aggression may teach him that inappropriately aggressive play results in no play at all.

Any objects used to distract a cat from play aggression should be kept at a distance from your hands so that the cat cannot bite or scratch you while venting his aggression on the toy.

Fear Aggression

This type of aggression may be seen when a cat encounters unfamiliar stimuli, such as a new person, animal, or noise, or when a cat is exposed to an experience that he associates with unpleasant events, such as a trip to the veterinarian.

Cats demonstrating fear aggression may flatten their ears against their heads, hiss, bare their teeth, or crouch low to the ground with their tail tucked under their body, and their fur may stand on end.

The best way to deal with fear aggression is to identify and avoid situations that produce a fearful response. If a situation cannot be avoided, then you can attempt gradual desensitization by briefly exposing the cat to the stimulus that causes the fear from a distance, and then rewarding non-aggressive behavior with food and praise.

It is very important not to console an aggressive cat, as this may be perceived as approval of aggression. It is also important not to retreat or show fear, as this may reinforce the behavior if your retreat is what the cat wants. Lack of attention is a better way to handle fear aggression.

Petting-Induced Aggression

For reasons that remain unknown, some cats may suddenly become aggressive when being petted. Possible explanations include overstimulation and an attempt by the cat to control when the petting ends. Handling, bathing, grooming, and nail trimming can also cause this type of aggression. In many cases, the cat will demonstrate dilated pupils, tail lashing, and ears moved backward on the head before becoming aggressive.

To manage a cat with petting-induced aggression, owners should avoid uninvited handling or petting, any type of physical punishment or restraint, and attempts to pick up or interact with the cat while he is eating. Rewarding a cat with a food treat for allowing brief, light stroking without signs of aggression may also be helpful. Over time, owners can gradually increase the duration of stroking, but with any sign of aggression, the owner should stop the petting and begin a cooling down period with no physical contact.

It is particularly important to supervise cats that display this type of aggression when they are in the presence of young children, who often want to pet cats but miss the visual cues of impending aggression. Ideally, owners should prevent physical contact between small children and a cat with a history of petting-induced aggression.

Redirected Aggression

When a cat is excited by a stimulus but cannot respond directly, the cat may redirect his aggression toward a human or another cat. Common stimuli that trigger redirected aggression include loud noises, seeing an outdoor or stray cat through a window, or an altercation with another cat in the house. Sometimes, aggression may be redirected toward a human after an aggressive interaction between indoor cats. The best way to prevent this type of aggression is to remove or avoid the stimuli, for example, by pulling down a window shade, using deterrents to keep stray cats away from the window, or by preventing aggressive interactions among indoor cats.

Pain-Induced Aggression

Cats that are in pain may act aggressively toward people or other pets in an attempt to avoid touch, movement, or certain activities that might worsen the pain. Cats with osteoarthritis, for example, may resent having their joints touched or manipulated, and may hiss, bite, or scratch in response. Rarely, some cats may continue to act aggressively even after once-painful parts of their body have healed, presumably to avoid the pain they experienced previously.

Owners can manage pain-induced aggression by refraining from touching painful parts of a cat's body and by working with a veterinarian to establish an effective therapeutic plan for pain control.

Status-Induced Aggression

Cats may occasionally show signs of aggression toward people or other pets when they want to establish social dominance. Cats that block doors with their bodies or swat at other cats as they pass may be demonstrating this type of behavior. The best way to address status-induced aggression is to ignore an offending cat completely. Attention, including play and food rewards, should be given only when an aggressive cat is relaxed. A relaxed cat is not swatting or hissing, has normal sized pupils, ears held upright, and normal tail posture, with the tail held upward with no flicking, twitching, or hairs on end.

Territorial Aggression

Cats tend to establish and defend their territories. They may show aggression toward newly introduced cats, and occasionally other animals or people, that encroach upon their established domain. In some cases, cats may even attack resident cats that were previously accepted but were away from the home, such as for a hospital stay. This aggression commonly takes the form of swatting, chasing, and attacking the encroaching individual.

The most important thing to keep in mind when dealing with territorial aggression is not to rush an introduction or reintroduction. New or returning cats should be confined to their own room with separate litter box, water, and food. After a few days, replace the new or returning cat with the aggressive cat and close the door for about 30 minutes, then return the cat being introduced/reintroduced back to his own room and the aggressor back to the rest of the house. This step can be repeated daily for several days.

The next step is to place the cats on opposite ends of the same room in carriers or on leashes with harnesses, so that they can see and smell each other but cannot interact. Feed the cats so that they associate the positive experience of being fed with the presence of the other cat. If they won't eat, move them farther apart. This step should be done repeatedly over several days, with a smaller distance between the cats each time. Lastly, once the cats have become acclimated to each other's presence with restraint and feeding, release them in the same room, at a distance, and feed them. If any signs of aggression occur, resume restraint and feeding in the same room until the cats calm down.

This process can take weeks to months, depending upon the cats involved. In some cases, your veterinarian may have to prescribe medication to one or both cats to prevent adverse interactions, but it is important to note that medication must be used in conjunction with the gradual desensitization process outlined above.

It is crucial that you never put your hand or any other body part between cats that are fighting, as you can be seriously injured. Using barriers such as baby gates or panels made of cardboard, light wood, or plastic to separate aggressive cats can be very effective.

Maternal Aggression

Queens that have recently given birth and are nursing kittens may demonstrate aggression toward individuals that approach them. Owners should provide a quiet, low-stress environment, keep visitors to a minimum, and avoid contact with the queen and kittens if they observe aggression. Maternal aggression will usually subside as the kittens get older and more independent.



Inter-Cat Aggression

Male, and more rarely female, cats may demonstrate aggression toward other male cats as they approach social maturity between two and four years of age. The first step in addressing this behavior is to neuter or spay all cats involved, as sexual hormones may play an important role in this type of aggression. Territorial aggression may also play a role, as described above. If neutering and spaying does not improve the situation, the cats should be separated and reintroduced using the technique outlined above.

Alternatives to Declawing

What is declawing?

Feline declawing is an elective and ethically controversial procedure, which is NOT medically necessary for cats in most instances. Declawing entails the amputation of a cat's third phalanx or third "toe bone". Unlike human nails, cat's claws are attached to the last bone in their toes. A comparison in human terms would be cutting off a person's finger at the last joint of each finger.

It is important to understand that scratching is normal behavior for cats, which has an inherent function. The primary reason cats scratch is to maintain the necessary claw motion used in hunting and climbing, as well to stretch their body. Scratching serves to groom the front claws and leave markers of the cat's presence. A cat's claws grow in layers and scratching removes the worn outer layer to expose the new growth inside. Cat owners must therefore provide alternatives for cats such as suitable scratchers.

Alternatives to declawing

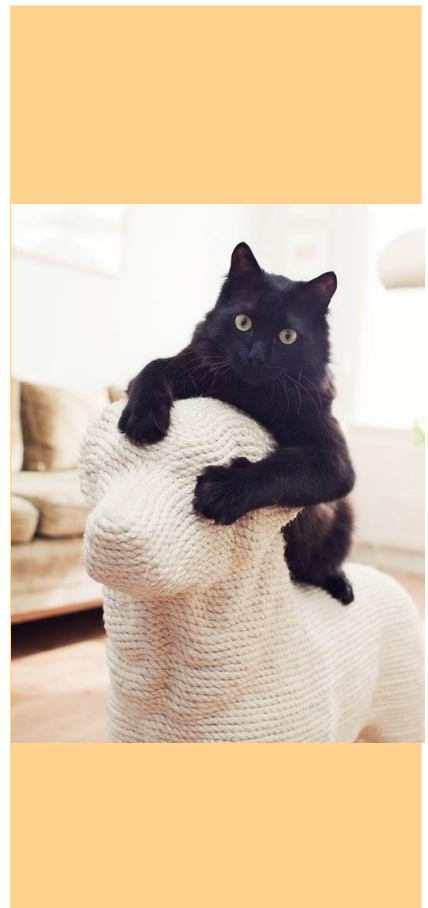
Scratching posts/pads

Provide your cat with suitable 'scratchers' where they can exhibit normal scratching behavior. Scratchers come in multiple styles and textures. It is important to experiment with a variety of textures and types of scratchers to determine which your cat prefers. Some examples include scratching posts or pads with sisal rope or rough fabric, cardboard boxes, and lumber or logs. Scratchers can be vertical or horizontal and there are even varieties that blend into your home décor.

The placement of scratchers is very important. Cats often stretch or scratch when they wake up so consider placing one near where your cat sleeps. It may also be effective to place a scratcher near or in front of a cat's preferred, yet undesirable, scratching object (e.g. corner of the couch). Kittens and cats can be trained to use scratchers by rewarding use of the scratcher with the cat's favorite treat. If the cat scratches elsewhere, they should be gently picked up, taken to the scratcher, and then rewarded. Cats should always be positively reinforced and never punished.

Regular claw trimming

Regular trimming your cat's claws can prevent injury and damage to household items. Proper feline nail trimmers should be used to prevent splintering of the claws. The frequency of claw trimming will depend on your cat's lifestyle. Indoor cats, kittens, and older cats will need more regular nail trims, whereas outdoor cats may naturally wear down their nails requiring less frequent trimming. If possible, start trimming as kittens so they become comfortable with the process early on. If your cat does not like claw trimmings start slow, offer breaks, and make it a familiar routine. Ask your veterinarian for advice or demonstration on trimming your cat's claws. Always trim claws in a calm environment and provide positive reinforcement. Proper training to scratch on appropriate surfaces, combined with nail care, can prevent damage in the home.



Alternatives to Declawing

- **Temporary synthetic nail caps**

- These caps are glued over your cat's nails to help prevent human injury and damage to household items. The nail caps usually need to be re-applied every 4-6 weeks; therefore, they may be a less desirable alternative to regular nail trimming, suitable scratchers, and environmental enrichment.

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- **Synthetic facial pheromone sprays/diffusers**

- Continued scratching by cats may be related to stress, anxiety, attention seeking, or a perceived lack of security in their environment. Anxiety can also be intensified by punishment, thus driving the cat to increase scratching behaviors in the same or other undesirable locations in the home. Consider using synthetic facial pheromone sprays and/or diffusers to help relieve anxiety or stress. Apply where your cat has exhibited undesired scratching. Do so after cleaning with soap and water to remove the communication marking scents left by your cat's paws. Applying daily comforting pheromones can prevent your cat's need to mark these areas again. Feliway should not be sprayed on the desired scratcher. If undesirable scratching occurs in several rooms indicating more generalized anxiety or stress, it is recommended to also plug-in a synthetic pheromone diffuser such as Feliway to comfort your cat in their own home environment.

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- **Appropriate environmental enrichment**

- Providing your cat with an environment that is enriching is vital to teaching your cat to scratch on appropriate objects. Destructive scratching can occur in cats because their needs have not been fully met. Cats need the proper resources to perform their natural behaviors and have control over their social interactions. You can enhance your cat's health and well-being by ensuring all their needs are met in the home. The AAFP has a wealth of information for cat owners on environmental enrichment. Visit:

www.catvets.com/environmental-needs



Environmental Enrichment

Enhancing Your Cat's Quality of Life

Providing an Enriched Environment can increase activity, decrease mental stagnation, and prevent behavior problems. Cats need mental stimulation. An enriched environment gives cats opportunities to create their own positive experiences.

Vertical Space is highly desirable for cats and increases the overall space available to them. Provide cat trees, preferably with hiding spots, cat perches, and shelves.

Scratching is Normal Cat Behavior. Provide acceptable scratching materials (e.g., scratching posts). To train your cat to use the post, reward with treats and praise. Also put catnip, treats, and toys on or near the post. Scratching posts should be sturdy, and made of materials cats prefer (usually wood, sisal rope, or rough fabric). Locate the scratching post next to a window, sleeping area, or another favorite area. Many cats prefer vertical scratching posts; some prefer horizontal ones.

Interactive Toys and Hunting Games allow cats to stalk and catch; play several times a day with solitary indoor cats.

Keep the Home Environment predictable, but without rigidity or boredom. Make small changes that provide novelty. Studies indicate that cats play best and most often with toys that also use human interaction. Rotated or new toys hold cats' curiosity and interest for longer periods of time.

Cats in the Wild eat 10-20 small meals per day. By making all food available in the bowl, foraging time for indoor cats has been reduced to a few minutes per day, in contrast to the hours needed for natural foraging. This contributes to obesity problems in cats, which can lead to various disorders, as well as early death.

To Make Feeding More Natural For Your Cat:

- Use food puzzles, interactive food toys, and/or food and treat balls.
- Make homemade food puzzles from a cardboard box or a plastic beverage bottle with holes cut into it.
- Hide food in different places, and in or around new household objects so that cats can "hunt" for their food.

Social Companionship is important to cats because cats are social animals. Social companionship can take the form of gentle petting and stroking, feeding, grooming, and play. If cat owners are away for a large part of the day, it may be helpful for their cat to have another cat to interact with.

Preventing Startle: To enhance a cat's coping skills, make regular small changes in the environment to provide novelty. For anticipated changes in the family such as adding a new pet or baby, prepare the environment and introduce the cat gradually to these changes. For example, when moving, first introduce the cat to a small, comfortable space in the new place, which has been stocked with favorite items such as toys or the owner's clothing. When the cat has adjusted to this environment, gradually increase the new space available to the cat.

Cats Can Be Trained and Enjoy the Associated Attention

- Cats can learn to "sit", "come", and perform a variety of other tricks. Start with things your cat already likes to do.
- Reward cats with treats or positive attention to encourage desired behavior. Redirect undesired behavior.
- Do not punish; don't swat, slap, or yell at the cat.
- Train under calm, fun conditions using positive reinforcement (e.g., treats, toys, massage, praise).
- You can also train your cat to allow **teeth brushing**, nail trimming, and grooming.

From the American Association of Feline Practitioners (AAFP)

Introducing a NEW CAT into a household with already existing cats



Introducing a new cat or kitten to your resident cat or dog can be quite nerve racking. You want them all to get on together and welcome the new feline into the house, but this seldom happens quite so easily - even though your reason for getting another cat may be to keep your resident cat company. It may not rush out and welcome the newcomer with open paws! Careful introductions can help to smooth the way towards harmonious merging of animals - controlling the situation rather than leaving the animals to sort it out for themselves will give a much better chance of a smooth meeting and the best possible start together.

Introducing cats to cats

Remember that cats do not need to be social creatures - unlike the pack-orientated dog they function happily on their own without a social structure around them. They are unlikely to feel the 'need' for a companion even though you would wish to have another cat around. You cannot force cats to like each other - some will live with a newcomer easily; others will never get on or they may just manage to live alongside each other in an uneasy truce - you can only try. However, if there is no competition for food or safe sleeping places (as in most good homes) then cats will accept each other eventually and some will even seem to form close bonds with one another. While it may be a matter of feline choice as to whether cats get on, how you introduce a new cat or kitten into your home and to a resident cat or cats can make the difference between success or failure. Once a relationship becomes violent or very fearful and the cat feels threatened it can be very difficult to change the behavior patterns. Thus, careful introductions which prevent excessive reactions and taking things slowly is vital. Here are some factors involved in bringing cats together successfully:

Adults or kittens? A kitten is less of a threat to a resident cat than an adult cat because it is still sexually immature. It can also be better to get a kitten of the opposite sex to the resident cat to minimize competition. Neutering helps to remove most of such problems but may not eliminate them altogether. If you are getting an adult cat again it can be better to bring in one of the opposite sexes.

Timing Choose a quiet time when the household is calm - avoid festivities, parties, visiting relatives or friends and find time to concentrate on calm reassurance for both cats.

Smell is important Remember that scent is the most important of the cat's senses in terms of communication and well-being. You can try and integrate the new cat into your home and make it less alien by getting it to smell of 'home' before you introduce it to the resident cat. To do this stroke each cat without washing your hands and mix scents. You can also gather scents from around the cat's head by gently stroking it with a soft cloth and dabbing around your home and furniture. Likewise letting the cat get used to the new smells of the house and another cat before the initial meeting can make it more tolerable. For this reason, it can be very useful to delay letting cats meet for a few days or even a week. During this time keep them in separate rooms allowing each to investigate the other's room and bed without actually meeting.

Using a pen or carrier for introductions It is up to you to make both the new cat and the resident feel as secure as possible and prevent the newcomer from being chased or threatened (or occasionally the other way around). Problems can arise if initial meetings are allowed to deteriorate into a fight or chase. The best way to avoid this is to use a kittening pen for initial introductions. Kittening pens are metal mesh pens about 1m by 0.75m by 1m high with a door which can be left open or shut securely. The cat inside can see what is going on around it but feels safe inside its 'den'.

You can put a blanket over the top initially to make the cat feel more secure if you think it feels vulnerable. The pen allows the cats to see each other, sniff through the bars and have a hiss and moan at each other without any attack or intimidation. The bars allow them to be close together but provide protection at the same time. If you have taken on a new kitten, then it can be very useful to use the larger pen as a base for the kitten to be kept in initially. Introductions can be made using the pen and you can shut the kitten in with its bed and litter tray if you are going out and don't want to leave it where it can get into mischief or danger. The kitten can be shut in the pen at night (ensure water is available) with the other animals in the same room and they can get used to each other in safety. If you can't get hold of a pen or crate, then you can use a cat carrier or basket for initial introductions. Of course, you won't be able to use it as a den to shut the cat or kitten in for long periods because it is too small, but it will be better than nothing.

How to use a carrier or pen for introductions

- Place the new cat or kitten in the pen/carrier and let the resident cat come into the room. If you are using a cat carrier place it above ground level so the cats are not forced into direct eye contact with each other - this can cause aggression. Let the resident cat come into the room and give it attention and calm reassurance. If the cat decides to run away without investigating the new cat do not force meetings but accept that things may take a little time - this is probably the type of cat which will not initiate aggressive meetings but will stay out of the way and gradually accept the new cat in the household over time. If the cats show signs of aggression, distract them with a noise and then praise them for quiet encounters. You can use tit bits to encourage the cats to stay near each other and accept the other's presence and make it a positive experience - you want the cats to associate each other with pleasant happenings, not shouting or chasing. If you are using a large pen, then you can allow the resident cat free access at times when the kitten/cat is in the pen over a number of days so that they gradually get used to each other. If you are using a carrier then you will need to be a little more proactive and orchestrate frequent meetings. With both methods you can start to feed the cats at the same time, the resident outside and the new cat inside the pen or carrier on the floor. Throughout this process there may be some hissing and spitting but this should gradually change into curiosity and gradual acceptance - this may take several days or weeks, depending on the individual cats.

Face-to-face meeting

When you feel the time is right to let them meet without the pen then you can again use food as a distraction. Withhold food so that they are somewhat hungry and then feed them in the same room. Choose a room where either cat can escape behind furniture or jump up high or hide if it wants to. Put down the resident cat's food and then let the new cat out of its basket to eat - you will have to judge how close they can be - don't attempt side by side initially! Be calm and reassuring and reward the behavior you want with praise and tit bits of a favorite food. Gauge how the cats are getting on - they may find their own spots and curl up for a sleep or you may need to keep the new one separate again for a little longer, using meals as a time for them to get together a bit more. Once you are sure they are not going to fight or chase then you can start to utilize the whole house - the cats will probably find places to sleep and routines which allow them to live peacefully in the same house and partake of all the benefits of food, warmth and attention while gradually becoming used to and accepting one another.

How long will it take? may only take a day or two or it may take several weeks for cats to tolerate each other. It may take months before the cats are relaxed with each other, but you are on your way to success if you reach the stage of a calm truce between them. It is amazing how a cold wet day outside will force even the worst adversaries together in front of the fire after a large bowl of food.

Introducing the dog

While dogs and cats have often been portrayed as enemies, it is usually a great deal easier to introduce a new cat to a dog than to another cat. While both animals may be wary of each other initially, they do not see the other as direct competition and can actually get on very well.

If your dog is used to cats he may be excited initially at having a new one in the house but he will soon settle down and the novelty will wear off very quickly. He will begin to see the new cat as part of his pack. Many dogs will live happily with their own cats while chasing strange felines out of the garden, so you will need to take care until the cat is seen as one of the households. Likewise, if your new cat or kitten has previously lived with a dog then it will be much less likely to be frightened for long and will become confident around the dog more quickly.

Safety first

However, initially safety must come first. You will need to keep everything under control until the dog and cat have got used to each other. Stroke the dog and cat separately but without washing your hands to exchange their scents. The cat will then take on the smell profile of the house and become part of the dog's pack. Once again, the large pen is ideal for first meetings to keep the situation calm and the cat protected. Let the dog sniff the newcomer through the bars and get over its initial excitement. The cat may well hiss and spit, but it is well protected. If you have a large pen then you can put the cat in this at night in the room where the dog sleeps and let them get used to each other for a few days or even a week, depending on how used to cats the dog is. Some dogs, especially those not used to cats or of an excitable or aggressive disposition, need extra special care for introductions. They should be kept as calm as possible on the lead and made to sit quietly. The new cat should be given a safe position in the room and allowed to get used to the dog and approach it if it wants.

Easy does it

This may take quite some time and requires patience and rewards for the dog if it behaves well. For quieter dogs and those used to cats, introductions can be made by using a strong cat carrier. Keep the dog on a lead initially, place the carrier on a high surface and allow controlled introductions which are short and frequent. Most dogs will soon calm down when they realize the newcomer is not actually very interesting. Progress to meetings with the dog on a lead initially for safety. If your dog is rather excitable then take it for a vigorous walk first to get rid of some of its energy! Breeds such as terriers or those breeds which like to chase, such as greyhounds, may need to be kept well under control until they have learned that the cat is not 'fair game'! Young pups are likely to get very excited and may try to 'play' with the new cat, who is unlikely to want to join in! You may need to work hard to keep things calm and be aware that a sudden dash from the cat will induce a chase. Praise the dog for calm interactions, make it sit quietly and use food treats to reward the dog for good behavior. Again, associate the presence of the cat with reward for calm behavior. When you progress to access without the lead make sure there are places, where the cat can escape to - high ledges or furniture it can use to feel safe. Never leave the dog and cat together unattended until you are happy, they are safe together. The cat's food will be hugely tempting for any dog, so site it up and out of the way of thieving canine jaws! Likewise, a litter tray can be pretty tempting and should be kept out of reach of the dog if it is likely to snaffle the contents.

Ref: Feline Advisory Board - www.fabcats.org



Litter Box Care Guidelines

House-soiling, inappropriate urination/defecation, spraying. A cat's use of locations other than the litter box comes under many names. Why do our cats do this? First and foremost, it is critical to ensure that there is no medical component to the behavior. Urinary tract-related disease can lead to death in less than 48 hours. The diseases are painful and debilitating.

Consult your veterinarian **IMMEDIATELY** if house-soiling commences. Waiting to see what happens could mean the difference between life and death. Once your veterinarian assesses the cat for health problems, discussions about diets and behavioral problems can follow. Many times, the veterinarian will identify multiple factors contributing to the problem, including medical, diet and behavioral problems. We are here to work with you and your cat to resolve these concerns.



Photo courtesy of [Depositphotos](#)

Litter-Box Care

Location Location Location

Provide more than one location in the household for litter boxes. Consider having one on each floor if space allows. Avoid moving boxes around.

Depth Matters

Experiment with different depths of litter. Most cats prefer 1-1.5 inch depth while others may prefer deeper litter. Add a new litter box if attempting to try different litter depths (or types). Try not to alternate the litter depth or type within existing litter boxes. Take note of which litter boxes get used the most and choose that depth of litter for the majority of the boxes.

Negative Associations

Keep litter boxes away from rooms that contain noisy equipment such as furnaces or washing machines. The noises may frighten the cat. Avoid administering medications or doing anything unpleasant to your cat while they are in the litter box or litter box area.

Don't Soil Where You Eat

Keep food and water dishes in a separate room or more than 5 feet away from the litter boxes. Cats are fastidious by nature and do not favor a soiled box. In the wild, they have endless location options in which to do their business. How can we expect them to walk in a pile of old feces and urine clumps?

Litter-Box Criteria

Feline behavior specialists have comprised a list of litter-box criteria based on studies demonstrating what is preferable to cats:

Number of Boxes

Provide one litter box per household cat PLUS one additional box. For example, a household with three cats should have four litter boxes.

Scented or Unscented

Use unscented clumping litter. Most cats prefer this texture best next to sandbox sand. Scented litters can be unpleasant and even painful to cats, since their sense of smell is significantly more sensitive than a human's.

Clay Versus Other

While some cats will tolerate some of the newer 'natural' types of litters (corn, wheat, etc.), they are generally not preferred and will not be tolerated in instances where the cat is unwell or experiencing anxiety/stress.

Size Matters

Provide large size litter boxes that the cats are comfortable moving around in. Some older, arthritic cats may prefer boxes with LOW walls or a low door cut in the box. Climbing over the high walls may be painful.

Keep it Open

Remove covers from most or all of the litter boxes. Most cats do not feel comfortable in a covered box.

Keep it Clean

Scoop litter once to twice daily. More often is best. Empty out the litter tray once every one to two weeks. Clean the litter box with a mild detergent, rinse well, and dry well before adding new litter.

Cat Socialization 101



If you've just brought home your new cat, there are now millions of things for them to explore – from your furniture to your friends. Taking the steps to properly socialize them to their new home helps them have a stress-free experience. Common experiences like trips to the veterinarian, leaving them with a pet sitter, and introducing new members to the family will go much more smoothly if you take the time to properly socialize your cat. Here are a few ways to do just that.

The basics of cat socialization

To prepare your cat for socialization, follow these quick tips:

- Invest in treats and toys.** What better way to introduce your cat to their new world than with their favorite toys?
- Start right away.** The sooner you begin socialization, the better your cat will feel about their new life adventure.
- Make socializing fun.** Plenty of playtime (during and after your sessions) shows them you care.
- Keep sessions short so you don't lose their attention.** Several brief sessions every day are more effective than one long one.

Introduce your cat to new sights and experiences

The more you can safely and appropriately expose your cat to early in their life, the better adjusted — and happier — they will be. Don't do too much at once. Go slowly and provide lots of petting, cuddles, play, and treats. Introduce them to:

- Being pet and held
- Getting brushed
- Toys and interactive feeders
- Scratching posts
- Litter boxes
- Visitors
- Other pets in your home (when the time is right)
- Cat carrier and, eventually, riding in the car

Get them used to common sounds

Cats can be easily startled by new noises. Try introducing these common noises in a gradual and controlled way — at lower volumes and farther distances with lots of positive reinforcement and treats in an environment where they feel safe. This way, your cat won't be as stressed by them in their daily life.

- Door knocks and doorbell rings (especially if you have frequent guests)
- Noisy appliances, such as a hair dryer, blender, vacuum, or washing machine
- Phones and alarm clocks (do them a favor and turn down the volume a few notches if possible)
- Garbage and delivery trucks, buses, and motorcycles
- Car horns and sirens
- Boisterous family members
- Thunder and fireworks

Once your cat's all about your home, keep introducing them to new things. After all, socialization is a lifelong adventure.