CARING FOR YOUR CAT

Learn valuable information about how to care for your new cat in this resource guide.

If you have additional questions about the behavior or health of your new pet, or just want to update us with photos of them as they grow, please do not hesitate to contact us at 1.877.580.PETS or info@foundanimals.org
Congratulations on adopting your new cat!

You will find a lot of valuable information about how to care for your new cat in the following pages. This resource guide will act as a reference tool for you and your new pet from day one.

If you have additional questions about the behavior or health of your new pet, or just want to update us with photos of them as they grow, we’re here!

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877-580-PETS(7387) or info@foundanimals.org

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Congratulations on the newest addition to your family! Adopting and bringing home a new cat is a joyous and exciting occasion, but it also requires some careful planning and understanding. It is important to consider that your new cat has been taken out of some circumstance (be it the streets, a former home, or etc), placed into the animal shelter, and is now coming into yet another new and unfamiliar environment. Undoubtedly, your home is much more comfortable than the animal shelter, but the environment change alone can be very stressful on your new cat. With this said, we advise you to prepare your home accordingly prior to your new cat’s arrival.

This manual is meant to offer helpful suggestions to you in caring for your new cat. The contents of this manual are for informational purposes only. It is not intended as a substitute for professional veterinary advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always seek the advice of your veterinarian with any questions you may have regarding a medical/dental condition. Never disregard veterinary advice or delay in seeking it because of content found in this manual. Reliance on any information provided by Found Animals Foundation, Inc. is solely at your own risk. In addition, any links to external websites provided in this manual are provided as a courtesy. They should not be construed as an endorsement by Found Animals Foundation, Inc. of the content or views of the linked materials. Found Animals Foundation, Inc. makes no guarantees, or warranties of the services or products of the companies and organizations for which it has provided website URLs in this manual. If you choose to visit any website listed in this manual, or conduct business with any business or company listed in this manual, or choose to employ, contract or retain their services, etc., then you are doing so at your own discretion and risk.
How to Prepare for Your New Cat: Supply Check List

Supply Checklist
- Litter Box and Litter
- Cat Food
- Cat Dishes
- Toys
- Bedding
- Grooming Tools
- Nail Clippers
- Scratching Post

How to Set Up for the First Few Days

☐ Pick a quiet, small to medium room for your cat to stay in for the first 7-10 days.
  Why: Your cat has likely been living in a confined space while he has been at the animal shelter. Opening up an entire home can be overwhelming to your new cat. Some cats will adjust faster than others, so adjust to your cat’s temperament. Do not be alarmed if the cat is less affectionate, eats and drinks less, hides, or ever acts somewhat aggressive when you first bring him home - he is simply stressed. Give him time to get used to you and your home. If your cat is not eating, drinking, or defecating within the first few days, try offering him some canned food to stimulate his appetite. If this does not work, please consult Found Animals, your Veterinarian, or your behaviorist.

☐ In this room, include the litter box, food, and water.
  Why: By setting up your cat in this single room, he will know where to find his litter box, food, and water. It will also decrease the chances of any litter box related problems. Visit the cat regularly throughout this adjustment period. If there are children in the home, be sure to monitor their interaction with the cat and remind them to keep calm and quiet around them.

☐ Provide your cat with plenty of hiding places.
  Why: All cats enjoy their hiding places. This can be under furniture, a cardboard box, or a special cat bed. Do not be alarmed if your new cat hides for most of the day when you first bring him home - just make sure that he is eating, drinking, and defecating regularly and give him time to adjust to his new home. Be sure to let children know to leave the cat alone whenever the cat chooses to hide.

☐ SLOWLY begin opening up your home to the new cat once they seem adjusted to their room.
  DO NOT force the cat to explore the rest of your home. It is important to move forward at the cat’s pace. Keep the litter box, food, and water in the original room so that the cat knows where to find those items. Be sure to keep another litter box available in the home just in case your cat needs it while exploring. This is another way to reduce the chances of any litter box related problems.
New Cats and Upper Respiratory Infections (URIs) - The “Kitty Cold”

Since the shelter environment is so stressful on cats and because cats are kept in such close quarters while in the shelter, it is common for cats in the shelter to contract feline upper respiratory infections (URIs). Furthermore, since the transition into a new home can also be stressful, cats who are healthy at the shelter may begin to break with URI when they are first moved to a new home. If you notice your new cat sneezing excessively or has discharge from his eyes or nose, it is likely that your cat has URI. URI is also called the “Kitty Cold” because it is the feline equivalent of the common cold humans contract and its symptoms include: sneezing, nasal discharge, lethargy, lack of appetite, and dehydration. Note that feline URI is not transmissible to humans, though it can be transmitted to other cats through the air or direct contact. The best thing for you to do if your new cat begins to develop URI is to take advantage of any discounted health services offered with your adoption and to take your cat to your veterinarian. The worst thing you can do is to return the cat to the animal shelter because it has been shown that cats recover much better in a home environment.

Indoor vs. Outdoor:

There are many risks associated with allowing you cat to venture outdoors. Cats that are left outdoors are frequently subjected to the following:
- Hit by a car
- Harassed or hurt by neighbors
- Injured or eaten by neighboring or wild animals
- Stuck in a tree
- Startled and unable to find their way back home
- Picked up and taken in by Animal Control
- Unofficially adopted by neighbors
- Disease, many of which can be expensive to treat, messy, or even transmissible to humans

Many cats still seek the stimulation associated with the outdoors. There are many ways you can simulate them in your home and without the dangers of actually letting your cat outside:
- Keep your cat well exercised and devote time to play with him daily and make a wide variety of toys available to him.
- Install perches onto windowsills so that your cat can enjoy the view. You can even keep a bird feeder close to your windows to entertain your cat.
- Train your cat to walk on a cat harness.
- Build an outdoor enclosure for your cat.
- Install cat fencing around your yard. This type of fencing is designed specifically to keep cats in as most cats are able to jump most standard fences.

Diet: Feeding Your Feline

Most cats will adjust in time. We suggest feeding your cat the same food that he was eating while at the shelter. Changing a cat’s diet suddenly can result in loss of appetite, vomiting, or diarrhea. If you want to change the type of food to something different, change his diet gradually after he has begun to eat regularly. That is, begin by mixing in a small amount of your new food with the food your cat was eating at the shelter. Each day, increase the amount of your new food and decrease the amount of shelter diet per serving.

There are a wide range of commercially sold foods made for cats, many of which specialize in life stages or special needs (such as hairball control, calorie control, dental, etc). Canned cat food is also available and it should not be left out and may spoil. Consult your veterinarian to decide what type of food is the best for your cat.

Feline obesity is a very dangerous and common condition. As in humans, obesity is associated with health risks such as diabetes and liver and heart complications. It is important to monitor your cat’s food intake and weight. Portion suggestions usually appear on cat food labels, however be sure to adjust food portions to your cat’s unique metabolism and activity level. If your cat is moving towards an unhealthy weight, try the following:
- Adjust food portions
- Switch to a calorie controlled food
- Increase your cat’s exercise
- Consult your veterinarian to ensure that the weight gain is not related to an underlying health condition
Introducing Your New Cat to Other Pets:
Slow and Steady Wins the Race

We have already discussed the slow introduction your new cat will need to your home. Introducing your new cat to other pets will need to be done with even more patience. Cats are territorial by nature and stress very easily, thus introducing new cats to other cats or dogs must be done carefully. If introductions are done improperly, it can potentially be traumatizing or dangerous. Follow these tips to introduce your new cat to your existing pets:

- As discussed, keep your new cat in a quiet, small to medium sized room for the first 7-10 days and keep the new cat separate from the other pets.
- Take time and make opportunities for the animals to get accustomed to each others’ scents.
  You can do this a number of ways:
  - Swap the bedding that each animal has been using.
  - Handle your new cat and then visit the other animal in their separate area. Allow your pet to come to you and investigate the new scents.
  - Allow the animals to sniff each other through the bottom of the doorway.
  - Carefully watch each pet’s reaction to the scents in order to gauge their responses to each other.
  - Once your new cat is adjusted to your home and both animals appear comfortable with the new scents, you can begin introducing the pets.
- Set up a controlled and safe introduction. The pets should be kept behind barriers that allow them able to see and smell each other, but a physical barrier, such as a screen door or baby gate, should still be in place. Remember to take things very slow and to closely watch how the animals react to each other. Any pet fight is very dangerous and extremely stressful and a bad introduction could compromise the pets’ relationship forever.
- Some hissing and growling is totally normal. This is part of the adjusting process, but it can also mean that the introduction is going too quickly for the cat. Make a loud noise or use a water-filled spray bottle to break the cat’s concentration. Allow the pets to relax before reintroducing them.
- If you are introducing your new cat to your dog, you must proceed with even greater caution. Be sure that your dog is obedient to commands such as “sit”, “come”, “stay”, and “leave it” prior to the introduction to your new cat. After your cat and dog seem comfortable meeting through the barrier, you can move on to a face to face meeting. Be sure to keep your dog on a leash and keep plenty of treats around for both animals to be used to reinforce positive interactions. Allow your cat to approach your dog and DO NOT force any interaction between them. It is very important to move at a pace that your pet is comfortable with. Be sure to provide a hiding place for your cat just in case he becomes uncomfortable with the situation. You must also provide your can with a high place (such as a high cat tree or bookcase) to escape from your dog if your cat feels the need to do so. Animals are much better judges of animal behavior so trust your pets’ reactions and don’t force their interaction. These meetings should be brief and repeated until each animal responds without fear or aggression.

- Pet interactions should be watched for at least 2 weeks or until you are completely sure that your animals will be safe. When you are not home or not see their interactions, keep the animals securely separated. Even after the animals have become well adjusted to each other, it still may not be safe to leave them together unattended. This is a decision you will have to make based on your knowledge about your pets and their interactions. It is always better to be safe than sorry.
- If you have any questions or problems related to pet introductions, please feel free to contact Found Animals or consult with your behaviorist.
Toys: Enriching Your Cat’s Environment

It is important for you to keep your cat well exercised and mentally stimulated to ensure that your cat keeps healthy and happy. Here is a list of toys and other items that can help you keep your cat entertained:

- Self-play toys: this includes a wide variety of balls, springs, and wall-mounted cat dancers. Another option is a food-dispensing toy, which are great because they keep your cat motivated and forces them to work for their food.
- Interactive toys: these toys enable you to play with your cat and help strengthen your bond. This type of toy includes cat dancers and laser pointers.
- Perches and catteries: these enable you cat to get the benefits of being outdoors without the associated dangers! Your cat will be able to see, hear, and potentially smell the outdoors which will keep them visually and mentally stimulated.
- Scratching posts: provide your cat with appropriate scratching materials so as to avoid damage to your furniture. Watch for your cat’s scratching preferences (horizontal, vertical, or diagonal as well as type of material) so that you can purchase a type of scratching post your cat will actually use.

Teaching your cats tricks is also a wonderful way to exercise and entertain your cat. Using positive reinforcement, such as clicker training, you can train your cat to do tricks like “sit,” “down,” “up,” “wave,” and even to walk on a leash.

Common Household Hazards

Here are a few simple tips you can follow to keep your cat safe:

- Secure all dangling cords: Cats often like to play with and bite into hanging wires and cord, which can tangle, choke, or electrocute them.
- Secure all doors: Cats are not safe when they are outdoors, but they will certainly try to escape. Be sure that doors are secured shut.
- Pack away any valuables or breakables and remove hanging tablecloths: Cats are curious creatures that are known to get into their share of mischief. Climbing onto tables and pulling out tablecloths are ways that cats can easily destroy your belongings and potentially harm themselves.
- Check your dryer: cats love to hide in dark and quiet places. Check your dryer before you add your laundry and start the cycle to ensure that your cat is not hiding in your dryer.
- Cat food vs. people food: Not all food consumed by humans is safe for cats.

Here is a list of some of the foods that are hazardous to cats:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alcoholic beverages</th>
<th>Grapes and raisins</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caffeine</td>
<td>Onions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chocolate</td>
<td>Macadamia nuts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatty foods</td>
<td>Salt and sugar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicken and turkey bones</td>
<td>Yeast dough</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Be conscious of the everyday items that are poisonous to your cat and keep them secured:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All medications</th>
<th>Nicotine products</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Antifreeze</td>
<td>Insecticides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rodent poison</td>
<td>Pools and ponds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batteries</td>
<td>Certain plants such as Easter lilies and philodendrons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car care products</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fertilizer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household cleaners</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If your pet ingests a dangerous substance, don’t hesitate. Call the ASPCA’s poison hotline at 1-888/426-4435 (some fees may apply).
HEALTHY CATS

Choosing a Veterinarian

The worst time to search for a veterinarian is when you really need one, so it is important to plan ahead and research them now. You should evaluate the practice as a whole and whether or not the practice fits you and your cat’s individual needs. The best place to start is by personal referral by other pet owners, behaviorists, shelter workers, or pet sitters. Once you have a few clinics in mind, schedule a visit and request to meet the different members of the staff and tour the facility. Some things you should consider when choosing a veterinarian:

- Location of the practice
- Cleanliness and organization of the practice
- Number of veterinarians and their history and specialties
- Friendliness, competency, and professionalism of the staff
- Fees and whether they fit in your budget
- Location and accessibility of the practice
- Availability of emergency services
- Whether x-rays, ultrasounds, bloodwork, and other common diagnostics are done on-site or referred elsewhere
Affording Veterinary Care

There have been wonderful developments in veterinary medicine that enable pet owners to keep their pets healthy and happy. Unfortunately, such treatments or procedures can often be expensive, particularly in emergency situations. Here are some tips for you to follow in order to keep your veterinary costs less detrimental:

- Keep a pet savings account from which you can pull when disaster strikes
- Purchase pet health insurance, which come from a variety of companies with a wide range of plans
- Request to work out a payment plan with your veterinarian
- Contact your local shelter, veterinary school, or technician program and inquire what type of low-cost services they offer to the public
- Use your credit card or request a cash advance from work
- Seek financial assistance from friends and family such as a cash loan
- If your dog is a specific breed, contact the National Club for that breed or local breed specific rescue organizations and ask if they are able to help with any major veterinary bills
- Seek the assistance from organizations that provide financial assistance to pets in need such as the following:

  **National:**
  IMOM Inc.: www.IMOM.org
  The Pet Fund: www.thepetfund.com
  Good Sam Fund: www.goodsamfund.org
  United Animal Nations LifeLine Fund: www.uan.org
  Angels for Animals: www.angels4animals.org
  Feline Veterinary Emergency Assistance Program: www.fveap.org
  Feline Outreach: www.felineoutreach.org
  Cats In Crisis: www.catsincrisis.org
  Cody’s Club (radiation treatments): www.codyclub.bravehost.com
  Diabetic Pets Fund: www.petsdiabetes.net/fund
  The Binky Foundation: www.binkyfoundation.org

  **Local:**
  Actors and Others for Animals: North Hollywood: www.actorsandothers.com
  Pet food, spay/neuter assistance, assistance for veterinary care
  PAWS Los Angeles: www.pawsla.org
  Assistance programs for senior, disabled, or ill pet owners.
  Animal Health Foundation: www.animalhealthfoundation.net
  Veterinary care assistance
  Voice for the Animals Foundation: www.vftafoundation.org
  Veterinary care assistance programs for senior, disabled or ill pet owners

Preparing for Disaster: What to Keep Prepared for Your Cat

Your pet depends on you for everything, so when disaster strikes, you must be prepared on their behalf. Here is a checklist of what you should have prepared:

- Pet carrier
- Two week supply of food and water
- Litter and litter box
- Food and water bowls
- Bedding
- Prescriptions, medications, and dosing instructions
- Medical records
- Proof of ownership (licensing and microchip paperwork)
- Veterinarian and emergency clinic contacts
- Plastic bags for waste disposal
- Toys and treats
- Disinfectants
- Pet first-aid kit
- Printed “lost” flyers, complete with photo and contact information

Pet first-aid kits are available for both dogs and cats at local pet supply stores as well as through your Red Cross. They contain a wide range of supplies made specifically for your cat that could potentially save your pet’s life. Do not, under any circumstances, administer medication designed for humans to your pet unless under the instruction of a veterinarian. For example, aspirin can be particularly harmful to your cat. We also suggest that you keep an emergency supply of printed “lost” flyers just in case you are separated from your pet when disaster strikes. Be sure to keep them up to date with recent photos and the correct contact information.
Preventing Common Feline Diseases

Most common feline diseases can be prevented by following two simple things:

1. Keep your cat indoors, and
2. Have annual veterinary check-ups, to continually monitor their health, and to keep vaccinations up to date.

Common feline diseases include the following:

- **Feline Panleukopenia**: a highly contagious and aggressive viral disease that typically attacks the digestive system, lymph tissue, bone marrow, and the developing nervous system. As a result, symptoms include diarrhea, bloody diarrhea, lethargy, vomiting, loss of appetite, and seizing.

- **Feline leukemia virus (FeLV)**: a disease that affects the immune system and can lead to certain types of cancers. Though there is no set of common symptoms associated with FeLV, cats become generally immunosuppressed and become more susceptible to other diseases.

- **Feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV)**: a virus similar to the human acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS). Because this virus attacks a cat’s immune system, it can manifest in a variety of symptoms but most commonly chronic infections, loss of appetite, and diarrhea. FIV is not transmissible to humans.

- **Feline infections peritonitis (FIP)**: a viral disease that begins by infecting the cat’s white blood cells and then is spread to other tissues. There are two forms of FIP: wet and dry. Both forms are characterized by lack of appetite, fever, jaundice, and diarrhea, but the wet form is also associated with accumulation of fluid in the chest and abdomen.

- **Coccidia**: a parasitic disease of the intestinal track that causes diarrhea. Though there are forms of this disease that affects humans, the form that infects your cat is species specific and is not transmissible to humans.

- **Giardia**: another parasitic disease of the intestinal track that causes diarrhea. There are many strains of Giardia and it has yet to be proven or disproven that humans can contract Giardia from cats. Thus, it is generally advised to treat Giardia as if it were transmissible from feline to human.

### Transmissible to Humans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disease</th>
<th>Transmits via contact/bites</th>
<th>Transmits via feces</th>
<th>Potentially Fatal</th>
<th>Available vaccination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FeLV</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIV</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIP</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coccidia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giardia</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ringworm</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scabies</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
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### Flea and Tick Control

Fleas and ticks are a common problem on cats and dogs, particularly those that spend time outdoors. Because fleas and ticks can transmit diseases such as tapeworms and Lyme disease and cause serious health conditions such as anemia, it is suggested that you make use of the simple flea and tick treatments available on the market. A flea infestation can be seen by the “flea dirt” on your pet’s coat (this will look like a fine, black grime that will dilute red in water), excessive licking, biting, or scratching, skin irritation, hairloss, pale gums, and tapeworms.

Ticks often do not irritate the host, so you will have to examine your pet closely in order to monitor for ticks. Consult your veterinarian for treatment if you notice any fleas, ticks, or characteristics of fleas or ticks. Do not rely on over the counter treatment unless advised by your veterinarian.
**Myths About Spaying and Neutering**

**MYTH:** Pets get fat and lazy after they are spayed or neutered.
**FACT:** As long as you correctly monitor your pet’s diet and provide them with plenty of exercise, your pet will remain healthy and active. This is true of any pet, independent of spaying and neutering.

**MYTH:** It’s better to have one litter first.
**FACT:** There is compounding medical evidence that reflects that spaying your pet, especially before her first heat cycle, reduces or eliminates the risk of developing mammary tumors or ovarian and uterine cancers.

**MYTH:** I want my children to experience the miracle of birth.
**FACT:** Birthing in cats and dogs typically occur at night, so it is unlikely your children will witness the actual birthing process. Furthermore, mothers tend to prefer privacy while they are giving birth, thus watching the process may add unnecessary stress to the situation. An alternative you should consider is fostering homeless kittens and puppies for your local animal shelter or rescue organizations. This way, your children can get the same experience, but they also learn the social responsibility of caring for animals and the impacts of pet overpopulation.

**MYTH:** My pet is a purebred.
**FACT:** There are networks of responsible, professional breeders that work to preserve the breed. 25% of animals in animal shelters are, in fact, purebred. It is unnecessary for you to breed your purebred dog just because your cat is purebred.

**MYTH:** I do not want my male pet to feel less “manly,” or I do not want my female pet to miss out on the miracle of birth.
**FACT:** Cats and dogs do not have any concept of sexual identity or ego. Spaying and neutering does not have any emotional affect on your pet.

**MYTH:** My pet is so special and I want to produce more just like him.
**FACT:** It is possible for the offspring to look similar to your pet. However, when you factor in the new genes from your pet’s mate as well as the different environmental factors, it is virtually impossible for your pet’s offspring to be just like your pet. The offspring will have individual animals with entire personalities of their very own.

**MYTH:** It is too expensive to spay or neuter my pet.
**FACT:** The cost of care for a pregnant female and her litter or for a pet that has developed ovarian, uterine, or prostate cancer is MUCH more than the cost of a simple spay or neuter. Also, there are a number of low-cost spay and neuter clinics and programs throughout California.

If you are interested in spaying or neutering your pet, please research low-cost spay and neuter clinics in your area such as:

- www.clinico.org
  888-WE-SPAY-CA
- www.angeldogsfoundation.org
  888-504-SPAY
- www.fixnation.org
  818-524-2287

**Paws Come with Claws: Declawing Cats**

Many owners elect to declaw their cats so that the cat does not scratch furniture, other pets, children, or even the owners themselves. Many people are under the impression that declawing is the equivalent to cutting our fingernails when, in fact, declawing involves the amputation of the last joint on each digit.

Please review the following information if you are considering declawing:

- The healing process can be very painful and can lead to long-term health issues.
- Postoperative complications include hemorrhages, infections, and nail regrowth.
- Declawing robs cats of their ability to climb and scratch (a method of marking territory), which are instinctual acts that cats truly enjoy.
- Without the ability to scratch, cats are defenseless against the attacks of other animals or predators, especially if the cat ever gets outdoors.
- Some cats undergo drastic behavior changes after the declawing process. Some cats become very aggressive and are much quicker to bite. Other cats become very timid and are more prone to hide and avoid social interaction.

There are newer types of surgeries that have become available that serve the same purpose as traditional declawing. Laser surgery supposedly reduces bleeding and makes for a shorter recovery time. However, laser surgery still involves the amputation at the last joint of each digit and does not help any of the other physical or psychological problems associated with declawing. Tenectomy leaves the claws in place but involves the severing of the tendons used to contract the claws. With tenectomy, owners must continually monitor and trim the cat’s nails because, if left unattended, the nails can grow into the paw pads and cause infection since cat is no longer able to naturally file their claws via scratching.

Offering your cat the proper scratching alternatives will both save your furniture as well as help keep your cat’s nails filed. Pay close attention to the angle, material, and location of the furniture your cat has been scratching and offer them similar alternatives. Use catnip to lure your cat to their scratching post. Apply double sided tape to the area that they have been scratching to discourage them. You can also employ loud noises and a spray bottle if they attempt to scratch the furniture. There are also products offered that involve capping each nail with a dull, plastic cover in order to reduce the severity of any scratches. If problems persist, seek the advice of Found Animals or your behaviorist.

Declawing and tenectomies should only be considered after exhausting all other options and where the only other alternatives are the animal shelter or euthanasia. If a procedure must be done, research and invest in an experienced surgeon and carefully work with your veterinarian to develop a well-medicated and caring recovery plan.

If you are interested in helping to reduce the overpopulation of cats, please consider a low-cost spay or neuter. Many local animal shelters and pet rescues can offer this service at a reduced fee or even for free. Pet overpopulation is a serious concern, and by helping to spay or neuter your pet, you can help reduce the number of homeless cats and dogs in your community.
How to Trim a Cat’s Nails

1. Begin by choosing which type of clipper you would like to use. These can vary from the plier-like to others that use a sliding guillotine. Whatever you elect to use, make sure to keep the blades sharp as dull clippers can hurt your pet and even split their nails. You will also want to keep a towel or small blanket handy if you need additional help with restraint. You should also invest in styptic powder. It stops bleeding if you mistakenly clip too low.

2. If you are unable to comfortably hold your cat’s paws, try to have sessions where you gently pet his paws and do not attempt to clip his nails. Offer him praise and treats when he does allow you to touch them. Be patient and work with your cat until he is comfortable with you touching his paws.

3. Some cats are comfortable with their nails being trimmed and require minimal restraint. Unfortunately, other cats do not and require firm restraint in order to keep everyone safe. You will need to gauge your cat’s comfort level and adjust your approach and restraint methods accordingly. Approach your cat when he is calm and the room is quiet. Try to position your cat in the crook of one arm and hold his paw with the other hand.

4. Once you have your cat safely restrained, have a helper on hand to assist with the actual clipping of the nails. Be prepared to release the cat quickly if you are not able to continue safely holding him. Be sure to communicate well with your helper in order to avoid any injury.

5. Hold the cat’s paw with your hand in a fist and use your thumb to extend the claw. The quick is the pink portion inside the nail that houses the nail’s blood vessels and nerves, so be sure to avoid cutting into the quick because it can cause a lot of bleeding and pain for your cat. The helper should only cut the clear tip of the nail and leave space between the freshly cut tip and the quick. If the quick is accidentally severed, use the styptic powder to cease bleeding.

6. Do not be discouraged if you are unable to cut all your cat’s nails in one session. Most cats are not patient enough for their owner to cut all their claws. Simply praise and reward your cat for the nails he has allowed you to cut and wait for the next opportunity to try again.

It is important for you to trim your cat’s nails every few weeks. This will protect your couches and carpet and ensure your cat’s comfort and health. If you are still uncomfortable with trimming cat nails, you can have them trimmed for you at most veterinary clinics and grooming salons. While there, ask them if you can watch the process and if they have any tips for you to try at home.
Training Your Cat: Positive Reinforcement

Identifying Types of Cat Aggression

Play Aggression
This is your cat’s outlet for the exploratory, investigative, and predatory behaviors your cat would have practiced in the wild. It is characterized by chasing, crouching, pouncing, batting, and biting. You must work with your cat to make sure he is aware of what type of play aggression is acceptable. For example, discourage a young kitten to bite your hands or attack your feet because he will be more inclined to continue the behavior when he is larger and stronger. You must also make sure to provide the proper outlets for this play aggression. Be sure to play with your cat regularly in order to keep him appropriately exercised and keep a wide variety of toys around the house to keep him interested and stimulated.

“Stop Petting Me” Aggression
Cat body language is very subtle and, at times, difficult to detect, which is why owners often claim that their cat “suddenly” bit them while they were petting the cat. Little is known why cats who are enjoying petting abruptly find it unpleasant and bite. The best way to avoid this type of aggression is to watch carefully for the subtle signs your cat shows once he has had enough petting: tail twitching, ears turning back or flicking back and forth, general restlessness, and turning or moving his head toward your hand.

Do not attempt to correct this type of aggression with punishment, as it will likely worsen the aggression. Instead, offer your cat treats before he begins showing any signs of aggression as a form of positive reinforcement. Do not attempt to correct this type of aggression with punishment, as it will likely worsen the aggression.

Redirected Aggression
This type of aggression occurs when your cat has become overstimulated, be it by play, fear, pain, or anger, and redirects their energy onto something unrelated to the original stimulation. For example, if your cat begins to run away because something startled him and you attempt to grab him, it is likely that he will redirect his energy onto you in the form of a bite or scratch. The best thing for you to do is to make sure your cat is kept comfortable and has a variety of toys on which he can appropriately redirect his aggression.

Fear/Defensive Aggression
A fearful cat will likely be crouched down, ears turned to the side or flattened, pupils dilated, tail tucked, and possibly with body rolled slightly to the side. If you observe this type of behavior, your cat is likely fearful, on the defensive, and may attack if bothered. Work with your cat to soothe whatever anxiety is causing him to be fearful. Use positive reinforcement to get your cat more comfortable in the situation. Offer more hiding places to keep your cat feeling more secure, and consider purchasing products designed to soothe cats such as pheromone based products.

If you are having any persistent aggression problems with your cat, first seek the advice of a veterinarian to make sure that the cause is not a medical issue. You are also encouraged to consult with Found Animals and your behaviorist. Never attempt to handle an aggressive or fearful cat, as cat bites and scratches are prone to infection. Never attempt to punish aggression as it will likely worsen it.

It is much more effective to teach your cat what he CAN do rather than what he CAN’T do. Positive reinforcement is the best way to train your cat. Positive reinforcement can be treats, praise, petting, or even playtime with a favorite toy. Correct timing and consistency are vital in positive reinforcement. The positive reinforcement must come immediately after the act in order for your cat to make the proper associations between the reward and the act. Everyone in the home must be consistent in what behaviors are being praised so that there is no confusion of what acts are acceptable and not acceptable. For example, if your cat is now choosing his scratching post rather than your couch to scratch on, make sure he is rewarded immediately and each time he repeats it. Once your cat begins to use the scratching post regularly, slowly wean off the rewards.

Negative reinforcement can also be used, but be careful to only use it properly and only under the appropriate conditions. Just as positive reinforcement works by associating positive thoughts with desired behavior, negative reinforcement works by associated negative thoughts with undesired behavior.

Negative reinforcement can be a posture, noise, or a physical act meant to deter your pet from a specific action. Punishment is only effective when administered while the cat is doing the undesired action. If the negative reinforcement is given too late, even by a few seconds, the link between the punishment and the undesired act will not be made. Punishment will seem unpredictable and frightening to your cat. If done improperly, negative reinforcement can worsen or even create new behavior problems in your cat. No physical punishment should cause pain or discomfort. Be very careful with the severity of your punishment so as not to harm or shock your cat, both for the safety of your cat as well as your own.

- Textures: Double-sided tape can be applied to surfaces to discourage cats from scratching
- Smells: Citrus odors and colognes can be used to deter your cat from an object or area.
- Tastes: Certain sprays and gels are marketed specifically for the application to objects that you do not want your cat to chew on.
- Human controlled tools: Spray bottles, air cans, or whistles can be used to interrupt and stop undesired behavior.

Remember to be patient with your cat throughout the training process. As you work to modify behaviors, be sure to provide your cat with proper outlets for his natural cat behaviors. Train, play, and exercise your cat regularly to ensure a healthy and happy relationship between you your cat.
Litter Box Problems

Some cats can be very finicky when it comes to litter boxes, so begin with an uncovered, clean litter box. Be sure to clean the box daily and to keep it stocked with enough litter for your cat to appropriately defecate and cover it with litter. Once your cat is comfortable and using the litter box regularly, you can try other types of litter boxes, but keep an uncovered litter box available as an option for your cat just in case he is not accepting of the new type of litter box. Cats can also be finicky when it comes to the type of litter used so if you decide to change the type of litter used, do so gradually.

The general rule of thumb for multiple cat households is to keep one litter box per cat + 1 additional litter box available at all times. It is not uncommon for cats to harass other cats while they are using the litter box, which can be traumatic for the cat in the litter box and subsequently result in litter box related problems. Thus, until you are familiar with the dynamic between your cats, it is important to keep at least one box uncovered or with multiple exits.

There are a number of reasons why your cat may soil outside of the litter box:

Medical problems
The first thing you should do when you notice your cat is soiling outside the litter box is take him to your veterinarian for a health check. Cats can have medical issues that cause painful elimination. Cats will associate this pain with the litter box and proceed to eliminate in other places as an attempt to evade this pain. It is important to note that cats are not prone to showing signs of pain or discomfort, so it is imperative that you understand that eliminating outside of the litter box is potentially the only sign you will have when your cat is experiencing extreme pain or a life threatening medical issue.

Aversion to the litter box itself
Cats often cease using the litter box if it is dirty, if they have had a painful elimination, or if something startled them while they were inside such as a nearby appliance or an ambushing cat. Ways to solve and avoid such problems include cleaning the litter box daily and do a thorough clean once a month, monitoring their health, planning the location and type of litter box you use strategically, and by offering one litter box per cat + 1 additional litter box available at all times.

Surface and texture preference
If your cat consistently eliminates on a specific material or has begun eliminating inappropriately only after you have changed litter types, it is likely your cat has a surface or texture preference for eliminating. Do your best to copy your cat’s preference. For example, if your cat prefers smooth surfaces such as tile or hardwood floors, place the litter box in an area that offers those surfaces and keep a portion of the litter box bottom bare. You can also switch back to the litter type your cat had been accustomed to or research of litters that offer a similar texture.

Location preference
If your cat is eliminating in only quiet and protected areas, in an area that formerly housed a litter box, or in a level of your home that does not have a litter box, it is likely that the problem is related to the location of the litter box. Be sure that your litter box is kept in a quiet place where your cat feels secure and comfortable. If you decide to relocate the litter box, be sure to show your cat where the litter box is now located. Offer a litter box on each level of your home or more if your own a large space.
All cats will make mistakes or have accidents. If you catch your cat eliminating inappropriately, make a loud noise to interrupt him, take him to the litter box immediately, and set him just outside. Give him privacy and praise him when he comes out if he uses the box correctly. Never attempt to force your cat into the litter box, as this is likely to cause anxiety and more litter box related problems. Do not attempt to punish your cat if you find that he already has eliminated inappropriately because he will not relate the punishment to the act of inappropriate elimination. For example, showing your cat the poop he passed hours ago and then spraying him with water will not work to discourage your cat from repeating the act. At this point, the best thing to do is to place the fecal matter in litter box and clean the soiled area.

If your cat does eliminate inappropriately, be sure to clean it up thoroughly. Cats will continue eliminating in an area that smells soiled.

• If the item is machine washable, wash the items as usual with baking soda or with enzymatic cleaner from the pet supply store made for this purpose. Similar products are offered for carpet and upholstery.

• For a stain that has already set, considering using an extractor or wet vacuum followed by an enzymatic cleaner. Extractor or wet vacuums are available at your local hardware or grocery store.

• Avoid using steam cleaners, as they can set the stain and odor permanently.

• Cleaning products not specifically designed for eliminating pet odors, do not effectively eliminate or mask the stains and odors and may even encourage your cat to continue the inappropriate behavior.

• If your cat has soiled your floor or wooden surfaces, the paint or varnish may have reacted with the acid of the urine and you may need to remove and replace the paint or varnish.

Keeping Your Cat During Your Pregnancy

Unlike the popular belief, there is no reason to give up your cat simply because you are expecting a child. Though most people contract toxoplasmosis via ingestion of uncooked meat, people can also become infected by eating infected materials (such as your cat’s poop).

Why toxoplasmosis is not a reason pregnant women should give up their cats:

• In order for you to contract toxoplasmosis from your cat, you would have to eat some portion of its feces.

• The only cats harboring toxoplasmosis are those that are outdoors and hunting infected rodents or those that are fed raw, infected meat. The likelihood of your cat even harboring the disease is very low, especially if he is kept indoors.

• If your cat is exposed to toxoplasmosis, he will only be able to spread it for two weeks.

• The infected material in your cat’s fecal matter require one to five days to even become infectious.

Thus, if the litter is changed daily, exposure to the disease is unlikely.

What you can do to lower your risk of exposure to toxoplasmosis:

• Wash your hands thoroughly and frequently

• Avoid eating raw meat and unwashed vegetables

• Keep cats indoors only

• Wear gloves while changing the litter box or have someone else do it

• Change the litter daily

• Feed your cat only prepackaged food

Behavior Helplines

If you are having difficulty with your pet’s behavior, please utilize the following contacts:

Found Animals Foundation
310.574.5780

San Francisco SPCA Behavior Helpline
catbehavior@sfcspa.org

Feline Health Center, Cornell University (New York)
Dr. Louis J. Camuti Feline Consultation and Diagnostic Service: Available Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 9 am-12 noon and 2-4 pm EST (excluding holidays). Consultations are provided for a fee of $55 per call. 1-800-KITTYDR

Tufts University School of Veterinary Medicine Behavior Clinic (Massachusetts)
PETFAX Behavior Consultation: The fee per PETFAX consult is $250 and must be received before the consultation is done. tufts.edu/vet/petfax
Give yourself enough time.
This process can take weeks or months, so be sure to start far enough in advance. You do not want to put yourself in a position where you and your pet are homeless or, worse yet, you are forced to forfeit your pet.

It can be difficult to convince large rental communities to waive a no-pet policy.
Your efforts will be better spent on working with a smaller agency or home-owner where individuals are responsible for deciding whether or not you are allowed to house animals.

Find out what aversions the landlord has about pets in their property.
It is likely that the landlord's no-pet policy comes from a previous negative experience. If you are able to find out what it was, you will be better equipped to argue your case against it.

Prove to your potential landlords that you are a responsible owner.
When making your argument, bring a letter of reference from your previous landlord, proof of obedience training, and a letter of reference from your veterinarian. Promote yourself as a responsible pet owner and ideal tenant and promote your pet as a quiet, clean, safe, and well behaved animal.

Make a formal request to the ultimate authority.
Find out who has the power to alter the no-pet policy for you. Submit a written request with copies of any documents you have to support that you are a responsible owner.

Offer to pay additional rent or put down a larger deposit.
By offering to sweeten the deal, your landlord may feel better about the situation and be more inclined to alter their no-pet policy.

Get it in writing.
If you are successful in convincing your landlord to alter their no-pet policy, make sure to get the proper documentation. Make sure that your lease explicitly states that you are allowed to own and house your pet on the property.

Be honest.
The worst thing you can do is lie or try to sneak you pet into a new residence. Even if you are successful at hiding your pet during the initial move in, it is just a matter of time before your neighbors, maintenance staff, and eventually landlords find out. You can be subject to immediate eviction and financial penalties.

**National:**
- 101apartments.com
- apartmentguide.com
- apartmentssearch.com
- Apartments.com
- doghouseproperties.com
- equityapartments.com
- forrent.com
- homewithpets.com
- hubbuzz.com
- move.com
- myapartmentmap.com
- mynewplace.com
- onlineapartmentguide.com
- peoplewithpets.com
- rent.com
- simplrent.com

**California:**
- colonialprop.com
- fidofriendly.com
- freelists.com

**Los Angeles and San Fernando Valley:**
- freelists.com
- petrent.net

**Orange County:**
- ocadogfriendly.com
- petrent.net

**San Diego:**
- sandiegopartments.com
- petrent.net

**San Francisco Bay Area:**
- Marin Humane Society; call 415-883-4621 for a housing packet
- Peninsula Humane Society; call 650-340-7022, ext. 344 for a housing packet
- sfrent.net