

# How to care for cats

You may have heard that cats have nine lives. Well, maybe that's true, but one thing is for sure, your cat can have a long and healthy life with the proper care. There are many things to consider when caring for a cat, and we'll cover them all in the following:

- **How to Choose a Cat:** Choosing the right cat can be a big decision. Cat's can live up to 20 years, and a simple adoption can mean a big commitment. In this section, we will show you how to find the perfect cat. Cats can be found at shelters but you need to be careful with shelter cats as they may bring along some bad behaviors with them. You will need to spend time with a shelter cat to see if it is right for you. Kittens bring along another set of challenges. Yes, they will get into everything, because they are curious. You need to be around a kitten more than a cat, just because of this natural behavior. Cats overall can be more “independent” than dogs and need less interaction with you but that does not mean you can neglect them with your attention.
- **Cat-Feeding Tips:** Feeding your cat is obviously an important part of pet ownership. After all, it's one of the few duties that you will have to perform every day. Simply remembering to put some food in your cat's bowl is only the beginning. You must also decide what kind of food to feed your cat and when to feed your cat. Feed your cat at the same time you eat-so he/she won't be begging you for crumbs. Don't feed huge amounts-just a small bowl will do. Always provide a bowl of water for your cat. Sometimes your cat will decide to munch on the plants you have in the house. This can be deadly to your cat. Manufactures have developed spays that will not hurt the plants but will keep the cat from wanting to eat it anymore. Or you can resort to the water spray bottle. Each time you see your cat munching away on the plants, spray them with a little water, they will get the hint that this munching on the plants is not a good thing and stop.
- **Store-Bought Cat Food vs. Homemade Cat Food:** Homemade cat food has the benefit of giving you the peace of mind that you know exactly what you are feeding your cat. However, in most cases you can probably trust the medically and scientifically designed formulas of the major cat-food manufacturers. There are various types of store-bought cat food such as kibble or "wet" cat food. The dry cat food usually has less order. The canned food is nice as it comes in portions that are right for the majority of cats. Cats know what they will eat or not. So buy a variety of foods and see which ones your cat likes best. A happy cat is a good thing.

- **Cat-Grooming Tips:** Cats are usually considered to be very clean animals, and, for the most part, this is true. However, this does not mean that cats do not need regular grooming. You will need to check their fur to ensure it has not gotten matted. A soft brush is usually enough to brush out the fur of even some long hair cats. Grooming is very important. It prevents hairballs, stimulates your cats' blood flow, stops cat hair left when you pat her/him and provides some good bonding time for you and your cat. Clipping the claws can be painful experience for you if this is not done correctly. Wrap the cat in a towel and hold on to the wrapped cat securely. Start by clipping the claws on one paw at a time. Only clip back in the tip or grayish are of the claw. Going any deeper can cause pain.
- **Litterbox:** The litter box must be cleaned every day and freshened with new litter. Cats need a clean place to go or they will start using the rest of the house as their litter box. Make sure to scoop out the solid waste and the clumped liquid waste every day. Adding new litter to the box so there is adequate to cover up the waste is essential to inviting the cat to keep using the litter box.
- **Cat-Bathing Tips:** Usually cats do not have to be bathed. Aside from the occasional grooming, most cats are able to clean themselves. There are a few reasons why you would have to give your cat a bath. For instance, if your cat has fleas or gets sprayed with something unpleasant. The easiest way to bath your cat is the wash cloth method. Whether this is done outside or in the bathtub it is all the same. You will need to have your cat contained and on a leash. Then little by little get your cat wet with soapy water. You will have to rinse with the same method. Good luck as some cats will tolerate this and others will not.
- **How to Cat-Proof Your Home:** Your home can be a veritable obstacle course for your cat. While your cat may be able to live happily in your house for many years without encountering an accident, that doesn't mean there won't be danger lurking around every corner. Make sure that your cat can not open the cabinets where cleaning supplies are kept and ensure that all doors are closed to rooms you do not want your cat to go into. I said before that cats are curious and will investigate anything. In this section, we will show you all the potential hazards that disguise themselves as common household objects. We will also show you how you can make your house safe your cat and what to do if your cat eats something poisonous.
- **Cat Toys:** Most cat owners love to watch their cat play with the various toys they bought them. However, some of these toys can be dangerous for your cat. Yarn, for instance, a

staple among cat toys for years, can actually cause very serious injuries. Choose toys designed to be played with by cats. These toys are sold at most pet supply stores.

- **Scratching Post:** Provide your cat with a scratching post or a tree they can climb, cats will naturally want to scratch, it's a behavior from when they were wild that allowed them to mark their territory. Providing acceptable places they are allowed to scratch will save your belongings from cat claw damage. Cats love tall places, so a big, sturdy cat tree will not only provide a place to scratch, but will allow her to climb and enjoy a birds eye view of their surroundings.
- **Veterinarian Visits and Vaccinations:** Perhaps the most important step you can take in caring for your cat is finding a reliable and competent physician. Some veterinarians specialize in cats or a member of their staff specializes in cats. Call around and ask before taking your cat just anywhere. Most Veterinarians are good with dogs so finding a good one for cats could take a few phone calls. The veterinarian will know what vaccinations are required for your cat and these usually needed to be updated on an annual basis.
- **Outdoors:** Think very carefully before deciding to let your cat go outdoors. Contrary to popular belief, cats are not always naturally able to find their way home and even a cat that usually knows its way around can become disoriented if badly frightened. Other risks connected with letting your cat roam outdoors are parasites, serious or fatal illnesses or injuries from other cats or other animals, fights with other animals that can result in serious injury or death, or theft of your cat. Your neighbors may not appreciate having your cat use their yard as a litter box or chasing and killing the birds at their bird baths and feeder. If you feel you must give your cat access to the outdoors, consider giving it run of a fenced in yard or walking it on a harness and leash. Sometimes a cable run works out well for cats as it gives them freedom within limits.