



A New Kitten

A new kitten is fun and exciting. Here are tips to make the transition to your home easier so your kitten settles in well. Most of this would apply to an older cat as well.



Before

If possible, arrange with the place you are getting the kitten to keep a towel or blanket with the kitten for a day or two. This allows the kitten to have something that smells familiar when at your house. If you can't do that, take a towel along with you. Rub it on the bed, playmates, wherever the kitten spent time. Put the towel or blanket in the carrier for the ride home.

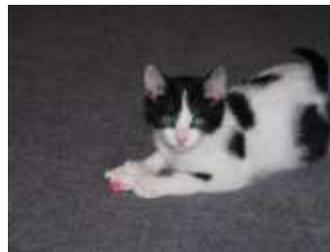
Kitten-proof your home to ensure your kitten's safety. Pick up all strings, rubber bands, paper clips, twist ties, plastic bags, or small objects that could be swallowed. Tie up the cords to blinds on your windows. Everything is a potential toy to a kitten.

Make sure any plants in the house are safe for cats. Many houseplants are toxic. Check electrical cords and wires and restrict access to them or cover them up. Block off rooms that have small places a kitten can explore. Kittens can squeeze into incredibly small spots but may not be able to get out. Go over the whole place carefully and look at it from ground level.

Supplies

Here is a list of things you will need for your new kitten. Remember things need to be kitten-size.

- A litter box, small enough that the kitten can climb into it easily and a scoop
- Litter – start with a clumping litter as most cats prefer it
- Food and water dishes (not plastic)
- Kitten food
- Toothbrush and paste - yes, kittens need to learn to have their teeth brushed
- Brush and nail trimmers
- A scratching post tall enough for the kitten to stretch out while scratching
- A few small, lightweight toys
- A box or bed for sleeping with the towel or blanket that has the smells on it



Prepare a room for your kitten with everything in it. Show him where the litter box is. You don't need to train kittens to use the box; that comes naturally. They just need to know where it is. Put it away from the food, water, and bed.

First days

Most kittens should stay in their room for a few days until they get used to the place, gradually allowing them time to explore the rest of the house under supervision. Confine them at night as well as when you leave.

Despite their curiosity and willingness to explore, it can all be overwhelming to some kittens. Take it slow and allow them to move at their own pace. Keep visitors to a minimum until the kitten is familiar with your house and comfortable with your routine.

If you have another cat or a dog in the house, you will need to keep the kitten separated for several days or longer depending on the other pets. Gradually go through the process of introducing them. Read our other articles for information on how to do it.

If you have children, especially young ones, you will need to watch them as well. Teach them to hold the kitten gently and speak softly. It's important that the kitten not get scared or feel threatened by anything. On the other hand, handling and socializing are important for a well-adjusted kitten.

Start a routine that your kitten can depend on. Initially feed three times daily and scoop the litter box at least once a day. Daily playtime is fun and necessary.

Schedule an appointment for your kitten's first checkup soon after you get the kitten. You want to make sure your kitten is healthy. Take a stool sample with you to check for parasites. You will also want to have your kitten tested for Feline Leukemia and FIV (Feline Immunodeficiency Virus). Your kitten may also need some vaccinations.

Summary

Kittens are generally easier than puppies at the beginning, but you still need to have things ready for them and a plan for their first few days. Kittens need routine so they become comfortable in your house. If you do everything right at the beginning and you should have a well-adjusted cat.

