



## **Adoption Guide for Rescue Cats**

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# **PREPARING YOUR HOME FOR YOUR NEW ADDITION**

Adopting a cat is an exciting experience for people but can be a very stressful experience for cats if not done properly. The number one error people make when taking a new cat home is not allowing the time for a proper introduction. This often leads to stress behaviors like fighting, hiding for long periods of time and eliminating outside the litter box. Your new feline friend needs time to adjust to a new environment. Cats are creatures of habit and do not like change, even if it is a change for the better!

Remember, people are innately impatient. You cannot rush this process. Especially when introducing a cat to a home with other cats, it can take about 6 months for the cats to acclimate. So, be patient, move slowly and let them adjust in their own time frame. This document will guide you through the process. Please call Our Companions if you have any questions or need advice.

Thank you for adopting a homeless cat!

## **Introducing a cat to a home without other pets**

Change is difficult for cats. Many are scared and need time to absorb their new environment. To do this without overwhelming the cat you will need to set up a “sanctuary room” one that is away from the main activity centers of the home, a bedroom, bathroom or spare room is good. Using a basement is not recommended. Put their litter box, food, water, toys and a bed in there. (Place all these items with some distance between them. After all, you do not eat, sleep and eliminate all in the same small space.) Also place some toys and a scratching post in there. Let them acclimate to this room first. Spend some time in there with them and play with them to start establishing a bond. String toys should only be used under supervision and put away after the play session is over.

If possible find out what type of litter the cat is used to and provide that type, be it regular or scoopable. Most cats prefer scoopable litter because of its finer texture. The litter should also be unscented. You may also have to experiment with different types of boxes such as those with high or low sides, although covered boxes are not recommended. In any case, most cats will adapt to a different box and litter as long as it is clean, and kept clean.

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Also try to find out what brand of food the cat has been eating. Sometimes switching to a new food too quickly can cause diarrhea. Slowly introduce a new food to your cat and see page 14 for additional nutrition information.

Grooming is another way of bonding with your new cat. If the cat enjoys being pet, chances are he or she will enjoy being brushed. Choose a grooming tool appropriate for the length of the fur. Start out slowly and gently, doing only a little at a time. Let your cat guide you. If you're lucky, they will rub up against the brush and start purring and won't want you to stop. Establish a regular grooming schedule, which is determined by the length of the cat's coat. Longhaired cats such as Persians may need to be brushed daily while shorthaired cats may only need a quick brushing once a week. If possible, inquire about the cat's grooming needs before you adopt and make sure you can handle the time commitment.

After a couple of days allow the cat out to explore the new home. Continue to allow easy access to the "sanctuary room" in case the cat gets nervous and needs to retreat. If you plan to move the litter box and food and water dishes to another permanent location, set up a second box and dishes in this other location and keep both available for a few days or longer. Remove the old only when you are sure your cat is using the new area. Removing the old locations could trigger litter box aversions or cause a setback in the transition.

Cat proof your home the same way you would toddler proof it, but be aware that cats can jump about five feet in the air. For the most part, cats are highly agile and graceful, but it is best not to leave a priceless heirloom out where it might accidentally get knocked over.

If you have young children or dogs, make sure the cat can retreat to a safe area where it is not trapped. Use baby gates to create a safe space if necessary. Having easy access to vertical high space is also important.

Buy a sturdy scratching post and show it to your cat. A 32 inch vertical post with a sturdy base and an inexpensive horizontal corrugated cardboard scratcher are two good investments. The cat is bound to use one. If the cardboard is preferred, you still have a nice perch for kitty. If the perch is preferred, the cardboard scratcher was inexpensive. The cardboard scratchers come with catnip. If your cat responds to catnip, rub the vertical post with it to encourage its use.

Some people may think that taking these steps is a lot of trouble. But by providing a proper introduction to your home you will create a happy, stress free environment for your new cat and yourself.

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## **Introducing the new cat to your cat(s):**

The introduction process is extremely important. First impressions can be lasting impressions when it comes to cats. The range of relationships that can develop when a new cat is introduced to a household can run the full spectrum from best friends who share and do everything together to all out war. Cats are territorial and some are clearly more territorial than others, so the time required for the introduction process varies greatly depending on the cats involved.

Introducing cats who are strangers to each other should be done in a gradual systematic fashion in which pleasurable experiences (food/attention/play) are associated with the other cat(s). The key is having patience with the process and knowing that the process takes time to accomplish and you may be required to repeat steps in the introduction process more than once. If you hit resistance or trouble, take a step back and go slower.

Throughout the introduction process, speak quietly and calmly to the cats and make no sudden moves. Praise them generously when they are tolerant of each other's presence, using words, toys and food as positive reinforcement. Never scold or use harsh or loud tones when they are together or they will associate unpleasantness with being near each other. Give special attention to the resident cat(s) to reassure them of your loyalty and love and help minimize jealousy. Give the new cat loving attention only during the resident cat's absence until such time as they become true friends.

Assign a "sanctuary" room to be used for temporary quarters for the new cat. A bedroom with attached bathroom where the litter box can be kept works well. Make sure this is a quiet room without a lot of traffic and a door that can be closed. Put a litter box, food,-water (as far away from the litter box as possible), scratching post, a comfortable bed and any cat toys in the room for the new cat with the-door closed. Leave the carrier in which the cat arrived open on the floor so the cat can retreat there if he/she feels threatened.

When you bring the cat home, put other cats away ahead of time so that you can take the cat to its room without encountering the other cat(s). Then close the door securely and go visit your other cats. They will smell the new cat on you. Give them praise and treats at this time.

After a day or two, you can begin the scent exchange. This step involves swapping the new cat's bedding with that of the resident cat so that they can become

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acquainted with each other through the all-important sense of smell before they have the opportunity to see each other. If the smell is too overwhelming for either cat, start with a smaller item, such as taking a sock and gently rubbing the sock on the cats chin and cheeks where the scent glands are located and allowing the cats to smell the socks with each others scents.

After at least one week of having the new cat in the sanctuary room and making sure the scent exchanges with bedding are going well, rotate rooms daily for 2-3 days. Let the new cat explore the rest of the house while the resident cat spends some time in the new cat's room. This will give your resident cats a chance to smell the new cat and rub their own scent on objects. Allowing this behavior helps prevent more dramatic displays of territorial behavior. Do not let the cats see each other or interact yet.

Feed the cats in each area with wet food twice daily, and play with the cats using an interactive toy in each area at least twice daily. Setting up a schedule of feeding treats or meals of wet food and a playtime routine minimizes anxiety and makes the cats feel more secure.

Playtime is a special time where you can cement a bond between you and the new cat. Many experts suggest using a fishing pole type toy with a feather or other similar toy which allows the new cat(s) to maintain a distance while getting to know you. Once the cats are introduced, using an interactive toy also distracts their attention from each other while maintaining a distance from each other.

After a week of letting the cats separately explore their respective territories, you can begin the introduction of the cats. Start by doing meal times with your current cat near the sanctuary room. Start far enough away with both cats on each side of the closed door where they are comfortable and will eat without being intimidated. With each new meal, slowly move the bowls closer to the door as each cat feels comfortable. Once both cats are comfortable doing this routine, you can crack the door slightly while they eat so they can see each other. Make sure there is plenty of distance and nobody can get through the door. The key to this exercise is creating a positive association for the cats with each other. They will learn that good things happen when near each other.

Once your feeding exercises with sight are going well you can begin to let the new cat out into the rest of the house for a few minutes. This is best done after a meal or after a play session when both cats are calm and relaxed. Start with a maximum of 5 minutes out together at a time. The length and quantity of the visits can be increased gradually each day. This process may take a few days or a few months

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depending on the personalities of the cats. If any actual fighting appears imminent while you are supervising, put the newcomer back in his/her room and proceed more slowly allowing 24 hours of cool down before attempting again. However, if they seem to tolerate each other remain vigilant and supervise them together during these supervised times for several days, playing with them with an interactive toy which allows you and them to maintain a distance from each other and you. It may be helpful to keep a towel or light blanket nearby in case an escalation occurs. You never want to stick your hands in a cat fight. It's best to use a towel or blanket between the cats if necessary.

Having plenty of vertical space available for each cat will be important for cohabitation so be sure to set this up ahead of time.

If the supervised play times go well, you can begin to allow them to cohabitate in your home. If any aggressive behavior occurs at any time, begin the introduction process again.

### **Introducing the new cat to dog(s):**

If you have dog(s) in the home, you may want to do scent exchanges before letting the cat into the rest of the home. This means taking the items of the dog and swapping them with the cat's things (i.e. blankets, toys, etc.). This will allow them to smell each other before ever meeting.

After proceeding with scent exchanges for several weeks, you can put a baby gate up in the doorway of the safe room. Keep this baby gate up only when you are home to supervise and keep the door shut while you are away. The baby gate will allow the cat to see the dog and vice versa without allowing them access to each other.

When they seem to be used to seeing each other, you can try to acclimate the cat to the rest of the home. To do this, you should remove the dog from the home for 30 minute intervals. During the times that the dog is away, you can let the cat out to explore the rest of the home. Repeat this for up to several weeks. Once the cat becomes familiar with the home and doesn't seem to mind the sight of the dog, you can try an introduction. Have the dog on the leash and do not let the dog into the safe room. Allow the cat to come out of his/her room on his/her own.

If you notice that the dog has an intense stare that you can't break, the dog may be cat aggressive. If the dog is just excited and curious, that is normal. Allow them to be in the same room while the dog is on leash and supervised for 30 minute periods

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throughout the week. If the cat seems too stressed, return him/her to the safe room for a 24 hour cool down period. Repeat.

Once the cat has completely adjusted to the room and to you, you can open the door of the room and allow the cat to come out on his/her own terms. Keep the litter box and food in the safe room until the cat adjusts to the entire home.

Having plenty of vertical space available for each cat will be important for introductions and cohabitation. It gives each cat a place to retreat to in order to feel safe and secure.

## **Using Behavior Modification to Help Your Cat**

By Karen Sueda, DVM

Your cat can be easily stressed or frightened by all sorts of things that happen in or around your home. The behavior modification techniques of desensitization and counter-conditioning can help your cat to be happier and well-adjusted. These terms may sound technical, but the techniques are actually quite simple.

### **What are desensitization and counter-conditioning?**

Systematic desensitization and counter-conditioning (DS/CC) are the main techniques behaviorists use to change a cat's negative response to specific triggers (or stimuli) in a variety of situations. These triggers can include strangers, other cats, dogs, sounds, petting, etc. These techniques can have a positive effect on your cat's behavior if they are done properly. The goal is to replace an unwanted emotional reaction – such as fear, anxiety or aggressive arousal – with a more relaxed, comfortable reaction. More desirable, acceptable behaviors will follow the calmer emotional state.

Systematic desensitization is the process of gradually reintroducing your cat to a stimulus. Counter-conditioning is the process of reinforcing a substitute emotional response. When these two techniques are combined, the unwanted behavior is replaced with a positive behavior through a gradual process of reintroducing the stimulus and rewarding your cat for remaining calm.

### **How do I start the DS/CC process?**

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You want to set your cat up to succeed, so the DS/CC process should be carried out in such small steps that the problem behavior never happens. If you attempt DS/CC when your cat is already anxious or aroused, you will likely be ignored. You need to start in a quiet, neutral setting and only gradually build up to the situation where the problem occurs. If the steps are too large, or you proceed too quickly, these techniques will not be effective.

Initially, you will have to avoid any situations in which your cat has displayed the unwanted behavior. Every time your cat displays this behavior, the behavior is being practiced and reinforced. Therefore, to support the overall success of the behavior modification, your cat should not be exposed to the triggers that cause the unwanted or unacceptable behaviors.

For example, if your cat reacts badly to petting, don't pet your cat for a period of time. Avoidance may also be a necessary safety precaution for your situation. Begin with just a few strokes of petting and then stop.

### **Do I need to change the way I interact with my cat?**

Yes, that may be necessary. Cats who are physically corrected (e.g., scolded, scruffed, yelled at, hit on the nose) or rewarded for undesirable behaviors (e.g., given food when they meow incessantly) may become more anxious or aggressive in association with the stimulus. You should also avoid reassuring your cat if you see signs of anxiety or aggression, since you will only reinforce these behaviors. Finally, keep in mind that whenever your cat successfully threatens the stimulus and the stimulus retreats, the behavior is further reinforced.

### **What else can I do to prepare?**

Before beginning the DS/CC, you will need to consider how to reward your cat – some examples are his/her favorite tasty treats (small bits of tuna or chicken, commercial cat treats, or canned food), a highly coveted toy, and/or attention from you (e.g., praise or petting). Make sure the reward you choose is truly enticing to your cat, something she will really anticipate.

For the DS/CC to be successful, you will need to reward every positive behavior that occurs during the sessions. You'll also need to plan each session carefully and systematically. Before starting each session, think through the steps you will need to take.

### **What is the basic technique?**

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The stimulus that causes your cat's unwanted emotional reaction and subsequent problem behavior will be reintroduced in a series of steps during which you'll gradually change either the intensity of the stimulus or the distance to the stimulus. You can change the intensity by altering the duration, the loudness, the location, the speed of movement or the components and response of the stimulus.

Start the DS/CC at the lowest intensity and/or at the furthest distance that results in no signs of anxiety or concern from your cat. For example, if your cat is afraid of strangers, test out how far away a stranger needs to be for your cat to remain relaxed. Present the stimulus to the cat, and reward him for his relaxed attitude and behavior. Repeat the stimulus over multiple sessions, and reward your cat for positive behavior.

Once your cat is consistently "good" at that low intensity and is anticipating the reward, you can move up to the next level by increasing the intensity of the stimulus or by decreasing the distance to the stimulus. Do not decrease the distance and increase the intensity at the same time; make only one change at a time.

### **Should I watch for signs of anxiety, arousal, or aggression?**

It is vital that you watch your cat for signs of anxiety, arousal or aggression. Early signs of anxiety or arousal include dilated pupils, tense body posture, sniffing the ground, scratching at a body part, vocalizing, shifting eyes and/or flattened ears. The less subtle signs include not accepting the reward or taking the treat in an altered manner (e.g., snapping it out of your hand or taking a treat and then dropping it), staring at the stimulus, hair standing up, a "bottlebrush" tail and/or backing away. Signs of aggression include growling, hissing, swatting, scratching, lunging and biting.

Should your cat display any early signs of anxiety, aggression or the problem behavior during a session, you should move your cat away from the stimulus. The stimulus should not be moved except when the stimulus is a person or animal who is in danger of being harmed. The main reason for this is that you do not want your cat's behavior to dictate the behavior of the stimulus, since this reinforces the negative behavior. Your cat should be moved to a distance at which the problem behavior is not displayed and then rewarded for the display of calm behavior. At this point, end this session. You should always try to end the sessions by rewarding a display of positive behavior.

### **How long will DS/CC take?**

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DS/CC takes time, and the process must be gradual for it to be successful. Since progress is often slow, it helps to maintain a journal of the behavior so that you can track your cat's progress. In the journal, record the stimulus, intensity/distance, situation and your cat's response.

Problems usually arise from progressing too quickly and not taking small, incremental steps. Don't progress faster than what your cat can accept and remember to end the session by rewarding a positive behavior before your cat becomes anxious or aggressive. Since the problem behavior took time to develop, look for small, incremental improvements rather than instant results.

If you are not successful with implementing DS/CC, or you don't know how to apply behavior modification to your situation, please consult with your veterinarian or a behaviorist. The reasons for your cat's negative behavior can be very complex and oftentimes an experienced behaviorist can offer detailed, specific recommendations for you and your cat.

To ensure success, it is important to make very small changes. Keep in mind that the DS/CC should be performed at your cat's pace – not yours. If your cat does react negatively, lower the intensity or increase the distance until your cat doesn't react badly.

The positive emotional response and behaviors that you are reinforcing and rewarding should be incompatible with the unwanted behavior. For example, sitting and eating quietly are positive behaviors that are incompatible with hissing or even sitting but appearing anxious. Thus, your cat associates the low level of negative stimulus with the positive reward for a relaxed state. Your cat will gradually learn to associate good things with the stimulus and have a positive response.

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## **Declawing Cats**

### **Psychological & Behavioral Complications**

Some cats are so shocked by declawing that their personalities change. Cats who were lively and friendly have often become withdrawn and introverted after being

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declawed. Others, deprived of their primary means of defense, become nervous, fearful, and/or aggressive, often resorting to their only remaining means of defense, their teeth. In some cases, when declawed cats use the litter box after surgery, their feet are so tender they associate their new pain with the box...permanently, resulting in a life-long aversion to using the litter box. Other declawed cats that can no longer mark with their claws, mark with urine instead, resulting in inappropriate elimination problems, which in many cases, results in relinquishment of cats to shelters and ultimately euthanasia. Many of the cats surrendered to shelters are surrendered because of behavioral problems which developed **as a result** of the cats being declawed.

Many declawed cats become so traumatized by this painful mutilation that they end up spending their maladjusted lives perched on top of doors and refrigerators, out of reach of real and imaginary predators against whom they no longer have any adequate defense.

A cat relies on its claws as its primary means of defense. Removing the claws makes a cat feel defenseless. The constant state of stress caused by a feeling of defenselessness may make some declawed cats more prone to disease. Stress leads to a myriad of physical and psychological disorders including suppression of the immune system, cystitis and irritable bowel syndrome (IBS).

*"The consequences of declawing are often pathetic. Changes in behavior can occur. A declawed cat frequently resorts to biting when confronted with even minor threats. Biting becomes an overcompensation for the insecurity of having no claws. Bungled surgery can result in the regrowth of deformed claws or in an infection leading to gangrene. Balance is affected by the inability to grasp with their claws. Chronic physical ailments such as cystitis or skin disorders can be manifestations of a declawed cat's frustration and stress."*

### **Moral, Ethical and Humane Considerations**

Veterinary justification for declawing is that the owner may otherwise dispose of the cat, perhaps cruelly. It is ethically inappropriate, in the long term, for veterinarians to submit to this form of moral blackmail from their clients.

*"The Association of Veterinarians for Animal Rights is opposed to cosmetic surgeries and to those performed to correct 'vices.' Declawing generally is unacceptable because the suffering and disfigurement it causes is not offset by any benefits to the cat. Declawing is done strictly to provide convenience for people.*

[The Association of Veterinarians for Animal Rights \(AVAR\)](#)

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*Some veterinarians have argued that some people would have their cats killed if declawing was not an option. We should not, however, allow ourselves to be taken 'emotional hostage' like this. If a person really would kill her or his cat in this case, it is reasonable to question the suitability of that person as a feline guardian, especially when there are millions of non-declawed cats living in harmony with people."*

Most people are vehemently opposed to declawing due to a combination of reasons: 1) because the end (owner convenience) doesn't justify the means (causing unnecessary pain to the cat); 2) because other, less harmful alternatives to declawing exist and 3) because claws are part of the nature or "catness" of cats. Overall, the view is that it is ethically inappropriate to remove parts of an animal's anatomy, thereby causing the animal pain, merely to fit the owner's lifestyle, aesthetics or convenience without any benefit to the cat. It should be emphasized that "most people" includes virtually the entire adult population of Europe and many other countries around the world.

Many countries are particularly concerned about animal welfare and have banned declawing as abusive and causing unnecessary pain and suffering with no benefit to the cat. One highly regarded veterinary textbook by Turner and Bateson on the biology of cat behavior concludes a short section on scratching behavior with the following statement: *"The operative removal of the claws, as is sometimes practiced to protect furniture and curtains, is an act of abuse and should be forbidden by law in all, not just a few countries."*

The following is a partial list of countries in which declawing cats is either illegal or considered extremely inhumane and only performed under extreme medical circumstances:

England - Scotland - Wales - Northern Ireland - Germany - Austria - Switzerland - Norway - Sweden Netherlands - Denmark - Finland - Brazil - Australia - New Zealand

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# Cat Nutrition

Cats on higher quality, grain-free diets exhibit a lush glossy coat that is an indicator of overall good health. High quality diets can help lead to a healthier life. Since cats are obligate carnivores, diets high in corn or soy can lead to a variety of medical and behavioral issues. A helpful guide to looking for a quality diet is as follows:

**Higher quality** foods contain meat as the first ingredient, do not contain corn, wheat or soy, and do not contain by-products.

**Medium quality** foods contain varying degrees of corn, wheat or soy and/or by-products.

**Low quality** foods are primarily corn-based and the meat is all by-products.

If possible, incorporate as much wet food into the cat's diet as the cat likes (or as possible):

- Canned food typically has more meat-based nutrients than dry food.
- In nature, cats are designed to get much of their water intake from their prey and therefore are less likely to seek out water as a separate source. A lack of proper (adequate) water intake can lead to various medical issues affecting the kidneys and urinary tract. Canned food is preferable in that it provides additional water which dry food does not.
- Dry food does not help with tartar control as is sometimes claimed.

Cats should have access to fresh water at all times. Many cats like moving water so water fountains provide a great source to encourage them to drink. There are many great stainless steel and porcelain water fountains available today. Be sure to thoroughly clean the fountains and all the filters and pumps to prevent bacteria buildup.

## **Helpful nutritional websites:**

<http://www.catinfo.org/>

<http://jacksongalaxy.com/category/nutrition/>

<http://feline-nutrition.org/>

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# Pet Safety

Even if your adopted cat is already spayed or neutered and is up to date on vaccinations, it is a good idea to take him to your vet for a get acquainted visit sometime during the first week or two after his adoption. This will give your vet an opportunity to get to know your new pet.

It is also a life saving idea to know where the closest 24 hour Vet Clinic is. Keep their phone number handy so that you can quickly access it in an emergency. There is no time to waste in a true emergency, and it is imperative that you call ahead to let them know you are coming. Entering the number into your cell phone is the quickest way to make sure the number is accessible when needed. Also keep the number of a poison control center handy (such as the ASPCA Poison Control Center 888.426.4435. A \$60 consultation fee may be applied to your credit card for using their services). Those with Apple devices (iPhones or iPads), may want to download the FREE APCC by ASPCA app as a convenient reference tool that you can then access via your iPhone or iPad.

- Never leave your pet unattended inside a car - especially in hot weather. Even with the windows open, a car can heat up like an oven in minutes. Hundreds of animals die in cars every year.
- Some plants are poisonous to your pet. Identify toxic plants and make them inaccessible. Be aware that some human foods are toxic to animals. Please refer to the guides on toxic plants and foods that can be used to pet proof your home.
- Don't leave pets outside unattended. Be cautious when opening and closing doors so that your new cat doesn't escape.

**Note:** The relationship between you and your feline companion has the potential to be one of the most loving and rewarding relationships in your life. Just remember the keys to good training: Patience, Consistency and Generous rewards.

Thank you for adopting your new friend. Please contact us at Our Companions if you ever need further advice or assistance.

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# Harmful Products for Pets

Alcoholic Beverages

Apple Seeds-contain cyanide compounds

Apricot Pits-contain cyanide compounds

Avocados-may cause heart irregularities, difficulty breathing

Cherry Pits-contain cyanide compounds

Chocolate-all forms but the darker the chocolate, the more poisonous-contains

Theobromine, a stimulant

Coffee (grounds, beans, chocolate covered beans)-caffeine

Essential oils

Grapes-unknown compound but leads to liver failure

Hops (used in home brewing)

Household Cleaners—read the label

Human Medications—especially Tylenol, unless directed by your veterinarian to give to your pet

Garlic in larger amounts- may cause hemolytic anemia

Macadamia Nuts

Moldy Foods

Mushroom Plants

Mustard Seeds

Onion in all forms-may cause hemolytic anemia

Peach Pits-contains cyanide compounds

Raisins-unknown compound but may cause liver failure

Raw Yeast Dough—will expand in the Pet's stomach and cause pain and possible stomach rupture

Rhubarb leaves

Rodent poisons

Salt-dehydrating

Sugar-Free Gum and Candy containing Xylitol

Tea-caffeine

Tea Tree Oil—especially harmful for cats, don't apply where a dog can lick it

Tomato leaves and stems-may cause tremors, heart irregularities

Walnuts

Xylitol-this is an artificial sweetener-may cause a sudden drop in blood sugar, tremors, depression

This is not a complete list. Whenever you are in doubt, please call your veterinarian ASAP!

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# Poisonous Plants in New England

Amaryllis

Azalea

Baby's Breath

Bittersweet

Black Cherry Tree

Black Locust

Bleeding Heart

Boxwood

Buttercup

Calandium

Calla Lily

Chrysanthemum

Clematis

Castor Bean/ aka Dog Tick Seeds

\*\*Cocoa Bean Mulch- new "green alternative" mulch

Cone Flower

Chokeberry

Crocus

Daffodil

Delphinium Elderberry

Elephant Ear

English Ivy

English Holly

Elderberry

Foxglove

Geranium

Hellebore

Horse Chestnut Tree

Hyacinth

Iris

Jack in the Pulpit

Lily of the Valley

Marijuana

Morning Glory-seeds

Mountain Laurel

Nightshade

Oak Tree-acorns, twigs

Primrose

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Privet  
Poison Hemlock  
Potatoes-all green parts  
Rhododendron  
Sweet Pea  
Sago Palm Tree  
Tulip/Narcissus Bulbs  
Water Hemlock / Wisteria / Yew

## **Toxic Houseplants**

Aloe  
Amaryllis  
Asparagus Fern  
Bird of Paradise  
Caladium  
Calla Lily  
Cineraria  
Croton  
Cyclamen  
Dieffenbachia/Dumb cane  
English Ivy  
Geranium  
Jerusalem Cherry  
Lilies  
Mistletoe  
Mother-in-law-tongue plant  
Oleander  
Peace Lily  
Philodendron  
Pothos

## **Hazards for kittens**

Electric Cords/Outlets  
Access to ceilings/walls (i.e. eaves, basement)  
Remove any pest killers/chemicals (kittens eat everything)  
Yarn/string/elastic bands  
Washing machines/dryers/refrigerators  
Breakable items on high shelves/ heavy items that could fall  
Open doors/windows  
Plastic Bags

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Bugs/bees/wasps

## How to Deal with Scratching Issues

Scratching is a natural behavior for cats and they need their claws to scratch in order to 1) mark territory 2) exfoliate claws and 3) stretch muscles in their back. Cat scratching is a normal, important social and physical behavior for cats. Below are items that you can use to redirect their scratching to appropriate places. **Cat furniture is a sure way to redirect problem scratching:** Hint- put them in their favorite room and near a window so they can enjoy the perch. Cats LOVE their furniture.

For example, this tree (incorporates, uses, includes) the textures of both rope and carpeting as well as very high perching areas. The cats will really be drawn to this one.



[Link to You and Me Cat Terrace](#)

**Some cats prefer cardboard, others prefer sisal. It's best to try both to see which is preferred. Two types of scratchers that cats seem to really love:**

Corrugated Cardboard: It's inexpensive and comes with catnip to attract cats



[Link to Corrugated cardboard scratcher](#)

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A 32 inch vertical scratcher with a sturdy base is recommended, such as the Ultimate Scratcher.

Ultimate Scratching Post



[Link to Ultimate Scratching Post](#)

### **How to stop scratching in problem areas:**

This is a product you can put on the carpet where they're scratching after you have provided a good scratching tree as an alternative. You can also buy double-sided tape that's a bit cheaper.



[Link to Sticky Paws](#)

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NoScratch!



[Link to No Scratch Spray](#)

## Shopping List for Cat's Needs

### Great shopping websites:

<http://www.chewy.com>

<http://www.amazon.com>

### Shopping List:

Individual Cat Carriers (plastic, not cardboard)

Litter box (without lid)

Litter

Food

Toys, both for solo play and interactive play

Double Sided Tape (for inappropriate scratching)

Scratching post & cardboard scratcher

Cat Tree

Nail Clippers

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# Cat Products: Toys



Da Bird



Go Go Cat Catcher Teaser Mouse



Cat Dancer Interactive Toy



Cat Dancer Charmer



Yeowww Cat Nip Toy



Go Fur it Cat Toy

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# Cat Products: Accessories



Slicker Brush



Ultimate Cat Scratcher



Smarty Kat Super Scratcher



Armarkat 16 inch Covered Cat Bed

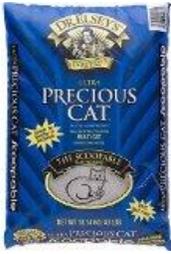


OMNI Kitty Cat Play Tunnel

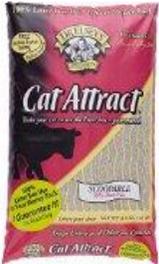


World's Best Cat Litter Link

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[Dr. Elsey's Precious Cat Link](#)



[Dr. Elsey's Cat Attract Link](#)

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## **Recommended Reading:**

- Pam Johnson-Bennett: Think Like a Cat, Cat vs. Cat, Starting from Scratch
- Gwen Bohnenkamp: From the Cat's Point of View
- Gina Spadafori: Cats for Dummies
- Tony Buffington: Your Home, Their Territory
- Mieshelle Nagelschneider: The Cat Whisperer

## **Recommended Websites:**

- Tufts
- Cat Channel
- Ohio State University Indoor Pet Initiative
- Cat Behavior
- Vicky Halls
- Pam Johnson-Bennett
- Jackson Galaxy
- Humane Society Cat Tips

*The relationship between you and your new feline companion has the potential to be one of the most loving and rewarding relationships in your life. Thank you for adopting your friend. Please contact Our Companions if you ever need further advice or assistance!*

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