CITY OF CHULA VISTA ANIMAL SERVICES
Saving Animals and Serving Communities since 1923

Welcoming Home
Your New Cat

9 Ways to Welcome Home Your New Cat

Congratulations! You have just begun a relationship that's bound to be filled with fun and affection. By starting off on the right foot, you can cut short that rocky adjustment period most new relationships go through.

1. **Go slowly at first.** A new cat may need seven to fourteen days to relax into her new environment. Save meet-and-greets with friends, neighbors and relatives until the cat is eating and eliminating on a normal schedule.
2. **Offer her a safe place to hide while she gets her bearings.** She'll appreciate the chance to observe her new family's routine from a small, dark space or one high above the action.
3. **Bring your new feline to a caring veterinarian for a wellness exam within one week after adoption.**
4. P**rovide the same diet she had at the shelter at least for the first week or two.** If you wish to switch to a different flavor or brand, slowly make the switch over one to two weeks, starting with a quarter ration of the new food mixed into the old favorite. From there, up the ratio of new to old about 10% each day.
5. **Set up a litter box in a quiet, low-traffic area.** Unsure of what litter to use? The majority of cats prefer fine grain clumping litter. Try that first unless the new adoptee is so young that she is in the litter-eating stage. Non-clumping litter is recommended for kittens under ten weeks of age.
6. **Cats must scratch, so make sure to provide yours with a sturdy, rough-textured scratching post to save wear and tear on furniture.** Cat manicures every ten to fourteen days also help reduce damage.
7. **Cat-proof your home before giving your new feline run of the house.** Put away harsh cleaning products, human medications and household poisons. Re-home any poisonous houseplants. And if the newcomer is a kitten, lock away any breakables and remember to keep the toilet lid down.
8. **Once settled in, a young cat or kitten will be eager to play.** Stock up on interactive toys such as feather wands and kitty fishing poles to engage attention and direct energies toward a positive pursuit.
9. **Ready a comfortable cat perch on a sunny window sill** - if it overlooks the birdfeeder, all the better! Observing live birds and squirrels beats out kitty videos any day.

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Responsible Care

For Your New Cat

Before Bringing Your Cat Home

You will need cat food, bowls for food and water, a collar and cat ID tag, toys, brush, flea comb, litter, litter box, nail scissors and scratching post.

Food and Water

Dry or canned foods provide a healthy diet. Dry is best for dental health. Cats are carnivores and they need special food with meat protein and other nutrients made for cats. Check with your vet for proper choices as some commercial foods cause primary problems. Do not give table scraps, dog food or any food with bones. Cats also need plenty of clean water available at all times.

Shelter

Cats should have a warm, dry place of their own in the house. Line a box with a blanket or towel. Wash the bedding often. It's safest for your cat to be an indoor cat. Outdoor cats are hit by cars, poisoned, hurt in fights, stolen, attacked by other animals and contract disease. Consider building a cat-proof fence or cattery. Plans are available and uncomplicated. Cats who go outdoors average a much shorter life. All indoor cats need a litter box. Always keep it in the same place. Scoop out solid waste and change litter once per week. Wash the plain with soap or bleach mixed with water. Don't use ammonia which smells like urine to a cat. Multiple cats need multiple boxes.

Handling and Love

Some cats like to be held and others don't. Usually, they set the rules on this subject. To pick up a cat, place one hand under its chest or belly. Cats can be very affectionate - some even lick. Cats like to be scratched on the side of their face and behind the ears. Cats tend to be more independent than dogs and need time to themselves which they usually spend sleeping. The more time you spend with a kitten when it's young, the more it will enjoy your company when it's older.

Grooming

Your cat will probably keep itself clean. Most cats rarely need a bath but they do need brushing and flea combing. Frequent brushing reduces shedding. Consult your vet or groomer about flea control. Cats who are allowed outdoors are prone to abscesses which can become very serious. Check for any sores while grooming. All cats need to exercise their claws - some more than others. Be sure to provide a scratching post and praise them when they use it. By keeping their nails trimming and providing alternative scratching sites, your cat is less likely to choose your furniture. Catnip on the post encourages its use.

