



# WHAT CATS WANT US TO KNOW ABOUT CATS

(AS TAUGHT TO US BY OUR 1001 FOSTER CATS AND KITTENS)

SOUTHERN COUNTIES RESCUE ADOPTION PACKAGE



Southern Counties Rescue - Cats & Kittens  
Serving Orange, Imperial & San Diego Counties

[www.southerncountiesrescue.org](http://www.southerncountiesrescue.org)

## BOARD MEMBERS-VOLUNTEERS

Linda Walliss  
949.768.5390  
positivelyme64@sbcglobal.net

Phyllis Elijah  
323.394.0954  
phyllis891@att.net

Julie Parlett  
714.756.0679  
jparlett4@aol.com

*If questions or you cannot keep a kitty you adopted from us for ANY reason please contact one of us listed above.*

View our website at: <http://www.southerncountiesrescue.org>  
to see our kitties available for adoption  
and other useful information under RESOURCES, such as How to Pill a Cat...

Southern Counties Rescue Inc.  
Serving Orange, Imperial & San Diego Counties  
PO Box 1399, Brawley, CA 92227  
[info@southerncountiesrescue.org](mailto:info@southerncountiesrescue.org)

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*This manual is a compilation of years of doing cat rescue and a lot of reading about cats on the internet. Much of it I compiled from the knowledge of my fellow rescue enthusiasts in Kitten Rescue, Los Angeles while I was active with them for over 11 years prior to starting Southern Counties Rescue.*

*When you place a cat or kitten into a new home you want it to have every chance of succeeding so you write handouts for the new adopter telling them what to expect in the first week, how to introduce their new cat or kitten to their children, what to feed and on and on. Soon you have a book of knowledge about cats and kittens.*

*I am also grateful for the wonderful vets who share their extensive knowledge on the internet just to make life better and healthier for cats. Much of the basis of these articles come from the Internet. And my own personal vets who will answer question after question for me, all to help the kitties.*

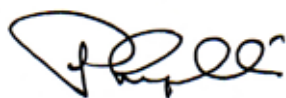
*I want to thank Catnip Newsletter created by Tufts University, Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine for writing and publishing such easy to read but thorough articles on all issues important to cats. They accept no advertisements from companies who make cat products so they have no conflict of interest when they rate food, litter, toys and other cat products. It's like a Consumer Guide for cats. They also share the latest information on cat health problems and solutions, good topics to discuss with your vet. If you only subscribe to one cat publication I highly recommend Catnip. Go to this website, <http://www.tuftscatnip.com/> to subscribe.*

*I have personally placed over 850 cats and kittens into new homes and have been involved with the rescue of over a 1200 cats and kittens. Before I started in Rescue I thought I knew cats, after all I was a cat owner for 15 years but I realized I didn't know cats at all.*

*From everyone of these critters I have learned something, no two are alike. They all have their own personality and they may or may not adjust to their new home the same way. With rescue kitties patience is a must.*

*A very sincere thank you goes out to my fellow volunteers who have suffered with sick kitties and dying kitties, huge vet bills, unpaid personal bills, all to help these kitties find a forever home.*

*And last but not least a very big THANK YOU to everyone who adopts from Rescue giving one more kitty a forever home.*



Phyllis Elijah, President  
Southern Counties Rescue  
Saving Cats and Kittens One at a Time.

# INTRODUCING NEW KITTY TO YOUR HOME

## What to Expect of Your New Pet in the Next Week

**The first 24-48 hours your new cat spends in your home are very crucial. Please follow these guidelines to reduce the change of adjustment problems.** Please remember you are placing your pet in new surroundings with unfamiliar sights and smells. Different furniture and eating places will add to its confusion. Your cat may be disoriented, frightened by sudden movements, loud noises, and even the threat of another animal. If you have other pets this is especially important.

### ISOLATION

**DO NOT PUT COLLARS ON KITTENS UNDER 5 LBS!**

We strongly recommend isolating a new cat in a room with minimal hiding places (such as a bathroom) for the first 1-2 days. Provide the cat with its very own toys, bed, litterbox and bowls of food and water in that room (bathrooms are ideal because there are no hiding places you can't reach). One more suggestion—put clothing that has been worn by the family members in there with the kitty—get them use to the smells.

### HEALTH WATCH

Vomiting, diarrhea and eye/nose discharge can occur during a cat's transition to a new home due to the stress of a change in environment and/or change in diet. If these symptoms persist beyond 48 hours, however, please contact us or a veterinarian.

#### WARNING SIGNS

- Blood in the stool
- Excessive diarrhea
- Excessive nose discharge and sneezing
- Loss of appetite
- Lethargy
- Fever
- Difficulty breathing
- Excessive vomiting

### SPEAK SOFTLY... MOVE SLOWLY... STROKE GENTLY!

- Visiting the cat often will help him/her bond to you without being overwhelmed by a new environment right away. Introduce family members and friends slowly and one-at-a-time. Your cat will not hate you and is not being deprived by being closed in a single room. It's vital that you give your new family member some time in an enclosed area to develop a sense of security and to appreciate you. You're the best thing that happens in your cat's day—don't feel guilty! After the isolation period allow the cat access to more and more of your home. Hiding, skittishness and meowing is normal during the adjustment period. It usually takes a few weeks or more for a cat to feel settled in a new home.

Animals respond to threatening situations by "shutting down" for a period of time. It may not eat, miss the litterbox, or even have diarrhea. Let your new cat or kitten sleep a lot. However, if this behavior continues for more than a few days, call the foster parent from whom you adopted.

Feed her/him familiar food in frequent, small doses. This teaches the pet that you'll love and care for it. Only feed a high quality food. **REASSURE!** While feeding your cat, talk softly and gently—repeating the pet's new name. If the cat is comfortable with it, try soft stroking or scratching on the back of the neck.

When you think your pet is ready, for instance it tries to follow you out the door (not to get away but to be with you). Then allow it to explore new surroundings by opening the door and allowing it to investigate nearby rooms. The original room will be his/her source of safety and comfort so keep it accessible.

It is **EXTREMELY IMPORTANT** to introduce other pets gradually. **Read the article, *Introducing Your New Cat to Your Pets*.** Your new cat should NOT interact with your existing pets for at least 24 hours or longer.

If your cat is shy, it may be because of former neglect or abuse. They need time to learn who you are and what sounds and smells are normal in your house. Sounds you take for granted such as key chains, your neighbor's dog barking, the flushing of a toilet, your children watching TV, or sirens on a nearby street will take time for him/her to adjust to. It takes 3 to 6 months for a cat to *really* settle in.

Please be patient... the love you will receive is a wonderful reward!

# INTRODUCING CHILDREN TO NEW KITTY

**Children are extremely excited with a new cat or kittens join the family. Please follow these guidelines to insure a happy transition.** Explain to your children that everything is new and confusing to your new pet.

## ONE AT A TIME

Your new kitty is in isolation and scared due to all of the new surrounding and loss of familiar ones including sometimes siblings and cat buddies. If you have multiple children have them go into the isolation room ONE at a time.

For at least the first few visits, a parent should be present to help the child learn how to handle the cat/kitten and to read the cat's communication signs. This also allows the child his/her own time to bond with the kitty without siblings struggling over the kitties. This is especially important for the younger sibling(s).

## SHORT VISITS

Keep the visits short, no more than 10-15 minutes at a time. This prevents the cat/kittens from getting stressed as a result of too much attention while they are adjusting. It also keeps the other children from getting too impatient for their turn.

## SPEAK SOFTLY... MOVE SLOWLY... STROKE GENTLY!

- Sit on the floor, use a toy such as a string or wand/pole type cat toy to entice the kitty to come to you.
- Do NOT allow the child to grab the cat/kitten and pull it out from it's "safe place".
- Coach it out by gently tossing toys or providing treats, even tossing dry kibble cat food.

Remember the kitten/cat is going through it's adjustment period so it may have less energy so don't force it to play madly, slow movements with the cat wand is best at first.

Pick cat up gently once it's use to you. Always support it's bottom feet. If it starts to struggle, let it go.

## TEACH CAT SIGNS

All cats communicate with what we call "cat signs": tail movements, ear movements, vocally... Teach these basic ones to your children and teach them to respond appropriately.

- **Tail straight up in air** – happy , confident cat, a greeting. OK to play with and approach.
- **Tail down moving side-to-side, a switching movement** – leave me alone! Cat does NOT want to be bothered, getting irritated at actions of others (could be other cats, people or surroundings). Children might confuse this with a dog's wagging tail.
- **Tail arched and puffed out** – cat is scared and is ready to attack or defend itself. Leave cat alone, do not try to pick up, it will bite.
- **Tail held low and tucked between hind legs** – cat is showing submission or defeat.
- **Ears up and alert** – interested in surrounding, toy, etc. OK to approach and interact with cat.
- **Ears twitching nervously** – cat is agitated and nervous. Speak softly and calmly, approach slowly.
- **Ears flat against head** – definitely scared or angry, a defensive position. Leave cat alone. Do NOT try to coach out of being angry, this is when people get bit.
- **Ears back** – again this is an aggressive position and may attack. DO NOT approach and try to handle.
- **Fur on back bristling** – definitely frightened and on defensive, cat may attack. DO NOT approach.
- **Eyes—pupils—greatly enlarged** – cat excited, angered or scared. Leave cat in peace, let him relax.

There are a lot more cat communications with tails, ear, fur, eyes and vocally.

Check these & other websites:

<http://www.wikihow.com/Communicate-with-Your-Cat>

<http://www.pets.ca/cats/articles/cat-communication/>

<http://jennifercopley.suite101.com/what-a-cats-tail-is-saying-a110402>





## FOOD RECOMMENDATIONS FROM RESCUE

Many people ask us what we consider “the best” brand of cat food. Most of us have different preferences (usually dictated by the whims of our own cats), but there are some universals we have discovered through experience and research.

**1. Know What You’re Feeding.** The key in choosing a good type of food is to **read the ingredients**. Cats are obligate carnivores and their bodies are designed to metabolize meat. Many foods, particularly dry foods, are loaded with grains that cats are not able to metabolize and therefore have limited nutritional value. Don’t judge a food just by the protein content listed on the label; there is a major difference between a food that has 30% protein derived largely from corn (the worst of the grains for cats) and a food whose protein content is entirely or primarily from meat. In addition, many cats can develop digestive and allergic conditions from eating a grain heavy diet.

**2. Wet vs. Dry.** Although dry food is certainly more convenient, **wet food is much better for cats**. Wet food is easier to digest and has a much higher water content (cats are better off when they get their necessary water intake from food, as they do in the wild, rather than from drinking). Dry food, in contrast, absorbs water as it passes through the cat’s system, which over the long term can lead to premature kidney failure. Dry foods are also more likely to cause obesity, which in turn can lead to other health problems, including feline diabetes. Many people have heard that dry food is better for a cat’s teeth – this is actually a myth that was probably thought up by a cat food sales representative. In fact, the opposite is true: dry foods that are grain heavy (which is virtually all of them) leave a starchy coating on the teeth that increase plaque and tartar buildup!

**3. Cheap isn’t better.** Cheaper cat foods may save you money day to day, but the long-term impact on the cat’s health may end up costing you more. When you don’t have that many feline mouths to feed, the difference between feeding a premium, healthy diet and a junky diet is relative small. But the impact on your cat’s health can be quite significant.

**4. Do some research.** Unhealthy pet foods are marketed as relentlessly and ruthlessly as unhealthy food for people. Fortunately, there are plenty of resources on the Internet to help you learn more about feline nutrition. Whether it’s figuring out if a grain-heavy prescription diet is really the best way to manage a medical problem or how to make a healthy raw diet for your cat, information is always just a few clicks away!

The following **list of recommended foods** is based on all of these factors. Of course, new companies and labels come into existence all the time, so your best guide is to learn to read the food’s ingredients and see for yourself what is best for your cat’s health!

Wet Foods		Dry Foods**	
Advanced Pet Diet	Merrick	Artemis Fresh Mix	Innova
Artemis Fresh Mix	Natural Balance	Advanced Pet Diet	Nature’s Variety Instinct
Avo Derm	Newman’s Own	Blue Buffalo	Natural Balance
By Nature 95% (Chewy.com)	Nutro Natural Choice & Max	California Natural	Newman’s Own
Blue Buffalo	Fromm	Merrick	Prairie
California Natural	Pet Promise	Evo	Taste of the Wild
Evanger’s	Prairie	Felidae	Wellness
Evo	Nature’s Variety Instinct	Fromm	Precise
Felidae	Trader Joe’s	Halo	Royal Canin
Halo	Wellness	Trader Joe’s	Weruva
Innova	Weruva & BFF	Costco Cat Premium	Purina Smart Choice Healthy Kitten

\*\* Many of these dry foods are grain free. Check the ingredients.

**And remember: always have plenty of fresh water** for your cat, change it at least once a day.

**We recommend feeding wet food twice a day, usually around ¼ can (6 oz) per cat per meal**, and leaving a bowl of dry food out to graze on unless your cat is fat or has urinary tract problems, then eliminate or limit the amount of dry food.

The food your cat has been eating is circled above and/or is: \_\_\_\_\_

The flavors we recommend are: Chicken & turkey primarily, with occasional fish &

*Note: Sometimes we feed lesser quality food due to cost of fostering, please transition your cats to above guidelines.*

# SHOPPING LIST

**You must have the following items when you bring your cat home:**

- Cat Carrier
- Good Quality Wet Food (Should be marked on Food Recommendations page, if not ask foster)
- Good Quality Dry Food (Should be marked on Food Recommendations page, if not ask foster)
- Cardboard Scratcher for “introduction to your home” room
- Litter Box & Scoop
- Litter

**If you don’t have these at home, buy these too:**

- Metal or ceramic bowl for water
- Metal or ceramic dish for dry food (DO NOT use plastic feeder)
- Small dish for wet food
- Cat bed—this can be a towel folded on floor
- Toy—home made is fine

**Within the first week be sure you have:**

- Nail Trimmers or Clippers (some vets use human ones)
- Brush or grooming comb or both
- Sturdy scratching posts, more the merrier to prevent scratching on furniture

**Not essential but cats love:**

- Kitty grass, or any organic grass for them to eat
- Cat bed
- Toys
- Lounge Cat Scratcher out of cardboard



**True Luxuries to spoil your cat:**

- Window perch
- Bird feeder or fountain outside to attract visitors (cat TV)
- Enclosed outside area or outdoor cat proof fencing.
- Extra large cat tree or wall mounted cat ramps & perches
- Heated cat bed by K&H, or one of their pads to put into another cat bed.
- Interactive toys, like Peek & Play, Round Cat Scratcher, Da Bird.





# What Your New Kitty Needs (Besides Love)



Own food bowl

We recommend ceramic or metal  
Can share dry food bowl



Deep water bowl, clean water daily -  
We recommend ceramic or metal or  
the running water fountains\*.



Litter box big enough for cat  
A box is never too big per the cat  
Litter (not too perfumed) and a  
litter scoop.



Premium Cat Food, wet and dry  
READ THE LABELS - 1st ingredient meat protein



Nail Trimmers

Toys, toys & more toys...



Cat Carrier -  
Keeps Cat safe



Things to Scratch on - Every cat needs SEVERAL different surfaces to scratch on for exercise, stress relief and claw management. Have one the very first day and add more later so they are through out your home. Cats like sturdy objects that don't move, avoid the small posts. They want them long enough to stretch their legs and sented with catnip. These will save sofas & carpet.



Cozy bed may or may not be used.  
The donut shaped ones are great on  
beds or couches & are easily washed.



Kitty grees. Cats need greens,  
providing them will save house plants



and usually a friend...

## CAT PROOFING YOUR HOME

By now you have bought the essentials from our shopping list & recommendations. You've also decided which room will be kitty's "safe room" to start out in your home. There's only one step left before letting your cat or kitten have the run of your home— Cat-proofing your home to save wear and tear on the household as well as the new arrival. Please remember just because your last cat didn't get into trouble this doesn't mean your new kitten or young cat won't.

The following steps will help create a safe environment for your new family member. Remember, kittens are much more active and inquisitive than adult cats, so these steps are extremely important if you are adopting kittens or teenagers.

### The Cat-Proofing Process

#### Get Down Low

Put on some old clothes and get down on the floor at a cat's level. You'll spot tempting hazards you may never have noticed from your human point of view.

#### Breakables

Put away any breakable treasures that are remotely accessible to your cat. Remember that adult cats can, and will, jump onto shelves and counters, so put yourself into the mind of the cat, and look around, and remove anything you value. Cats will want to get into absolutely everything, some are even adept at opening cupboards and doors, especially french door handles.

#### Other Destroyables

Kittens like to climb on furniture and drapes. Consider covering cloth furniture with some kind of cover, or even with a blanket or bedspread. Drapes should be confined to off-limit rooms, or at the least, tied up and out of reach for the time being. Trimming nails will help protect your furniture.

#### Poisonous Plants

Kittens and adult cats love to play with plants. Unfortunately, part of their play involves biting and tasting. Many types of common household plants are poisonous to cats, so you will either need to get rid of those, or hang them safely out of reach. A list of plants poisonous to cats is listed towards the end of this adoption package. Remember flower arrangements can be just as deadly as house plants.

#### Windows

Cats and kittens love to sit and look out windows watching birds, insects and other activity, they will do it for hours. Check to be sure all screens are securely attached if you open the window and doors.

Some cats have been known to tear holes in screens and escape so be sure your screens are strong and if in doubt, rescreen any open window or door screens with pet-proof screening material available at most hardware stores and screen shops.





## **Hanging Blinds Cords**

Kittens, and many cats will love to bat around cords from hanging blinds, but they can also get tangled up in them with disastrous consequences. Either anchor the cords firmly or tie them up out of reach. Better yet get cordless blinds, these are the safest for cats and children.

## **Electrical and phone cords**

Kittens' insatiable curiosity often leads them to one of the most dangerously tempting objects in the house: electric cords. Computers with their numerous tempting cords are a particular hazard. Invest in a cord management system or tape the cords together and fasten them out of reach. Those that don't manage easily can be sprayed with Bitter Apple, a very unpleasant tasting, but harmless substance. Do the same with long phone cords. Also be aware of dangling iron cords—they look like fun for a kitten to play with, until a hot iron comes crashing down.

## **Pest Poisons**

Remove any ant or roach traps from accessible areas. These small plastic traps resemble cat toys and will be very tempting for kitty to bat around but they are poisonous.

## **Hot Liquids**

Remember the curiosity of kittens and young cats, do not leave hot liquids in a cup or tall container unattended. In less than a second they can stick their paws into it or knock it over onto themselves.

## **Small Hazards**

Rubber bands, paper clips, thumb tacks, broken balloons, Christmas tree tinsel and other small articles are irresistible play objects for kittens, but pose a choking hazard. Put them away in containers, and leave the tinsel off the tree this year. A good rule of thumb is to put away anything that you would not want a toddler to get his hands on--the same reasoning goes for your kitten or cat.



## **Appliances**

Cats and kittens love to climb into everything—including dishwashers and front loading washers and dryers. Look carefully before you start the machine to be sure you have no “extra” items. I once almost “dried” my cat, she hopped in while my back was turned, thank goodness I looked!

## **The Garage**

It's probably better to label the garage “off-limits” to your cat. Too many poisonous/hazardous materials are stored there. Anti-freeze is particularly poisonous and is attractive to animals because of its sweet taste. Make sure that any spilled anti-freeze is cleaned up immediately, and the garage floor thoroughly washed. Store all caustic and poisonous materials in a closed cabinet.

This is far from an exhaustive list of cat-proofing ideas. No home can be completely free of all hazards, but if you go from room to room and use common sense, you should be able to minimize the risks to your new kitty.

## INTRODUCING YOUR NEW CAT TO YOUR PETS

If your new cat is going to be a companion to your existing cat(s) or dog(s), you should expect it to take some time before they are used to each other. It can be a matter of days, weeks or even months, depending on the personalities of the animals involved. While there is no foolproof way to make animals become friends, we advise that you play it safe and introduce the new kitty to your house slowly in order to prevent fearful and aggressive problems from developing. Here are some suggestions on how best to introduce your new kitty to your pets.

### Introducing a New Cat to Other Cats

You'll want to avoid any interactions between the cats that result in either fearful or aggressive behavior. If these responses are allowed to become habit, they can be difficult to change. It's better to introduce the animals to each other so gradually that neither cat becomes afraid or aggressive.

**Upon coming home, the new cat should be isolated from the other cats in the house.** The first step to integrating the cats is to get them used to each other's scent while avoiding eye contact.

- You can put the new cat's carrier (empty, door open) in the room with your existing cats and let them discover it on their own.
- Another tip is to put something on either side of a closed door that will attract the cats, such as food or a catnip toy. This will help start things out right by associating something enjoyable with each other's presence.
- You may also introduce scent by switching sleeping blankets between the new cat and the resident cats, or by putting the other cat's blanket underneath the food dishes.

Once the new cat is using its box and eating regularly while confined, let it have free time in the house while confining the other cats. This switch provides another way for the cats to experience each other's scent without a face-to-face meeting. It also allows the newcomer to become familiar with its new surroundings without being frightened by other animals.

The next step is to allow your cats to see each other without full body contact. Try setting up a baby gate or other barrier in a doorway between the cats, or firmly prop the door open a couple inches with doorstops (taking care that neither cat can fit its head through the opening and that the door is secure and won't slam shut). You'll want to supervise this at first until the cats are relatively calm in each other's presence, with a minimum of hissing, posturing and growling.

Once they are ready, you can let the cats meet each other. Take your existing cats into a different part of your home, and then leave the door open to the newcomer's room. Let the newcomer explore and encounter your existing cat on his own terms. You should expect some hissing, spitting and growling. Be prepared with a glass of water. If a fight breaks out, do NOT interfere directly. Instead, throw water on the cats, clap your hands and shout, bang a pot with a spoon or throw a blanket over each cat separately, wrapping the blanket around the cat before picking him up. Separate the cats until they have calmed down. It may be best to leave the cats separated when you are not home until you are sure they are getting along well. To be safe, you should trim their nails prior to the first face-to-face encounter.



Even after you have allowed them to meet, you should continue to feed them separately and maintain separate litter boxes until they are comfortable sharing space together. Successful introductions require time and patience. Don't expect things to be perfect overnight. Based on our years of introducing cats if you take it slowly, rarely is there a fight. After a few weeks they should start to be friends.

## Introducing a New Cat to a Resident Dog

Do NOT assume that your dog will like your new cat just because he loved your old cat. This is a different animal to him and they have to get to know each other.



Dogs and cats that have not experienced each other will require some extra time to become accustomed to each other. Dogs usually want to chase and play with cats, and cats are usually afraid and defensive. You can use any of the techniques described in “Introducing a new cat to other cats.” In addition: If your dog does not already know the commands “sit,” “down,” “come,” and “stay,” you should begin working on them. Little tidbits of food increase your dog’s motivation to perform, which will be necessary in the presence of such a strong distraction as a new cat. Even if your dog already knows the commands, work with obeying commands in return for a tidbit.

After the animals have become comfortable eating on either side of the door, and have been exposed to each other’s scents as described in the previous section, you can attempt a face-to-face. Put your dog’s leash on, and command him to either “sit” or “down” and “stay,” using food tidbits. Have another family member enter the room and quietly sit down with the cat on his or her lap. The cat should also be offered some special tidbits.

- At first, the cat and dog should be on OPPOSITE sides of the room. Repeat this step several times until both the cat and dog are tolerating each other without fear, aggression, or other uncontrollable behavior.
- Next, move the animals a little closer together, with the dog still on a leash and the cat gently held in a lap. If the cat does not like to be held, you can use a wire crate or carrier instead. If the dog gets up from its “stay” position, it should be firmly repositioned, and praised and rewarded for obeying the “stay” command. If the cat becomes frightened, increase the distance between the animals and progress more slowly. Eventually, the animals should be brought close enough together to allow them to investigate each other.

Although your dog must be taught that chasing or being rough with the cat is unacceptable behavior, your dog must also be taught how to behave appropriately, and be rewarded for doing so (e.g. sitting, coming when called, or lying down in return for a tidbit). If your dog is always punished whenever the cat is around, and never has “good things” happen in the cat’s presence, your dog may redirect aggression toward the cat.

You may want to keep your dog on a leash and with you when the cat is free in the house during the introduction process. Be sure that your cat has an escape route, and a place to hide. Keep the dog and cat separated when you aren’t home until you are certain they will both be safe.



Eventually we hope all of your pets will become good friends.

**Precautions:** Dogs like to eat cat food because it is very high in protein, and therefore very tasty. Keep cat food out of the dog’s reach (in a closet, on a high shelf, etc.). Some dogs like to eat cat feces; although there are no health hazards to the dog from this habit, it is usually distasteful to the owners, especially if the dog kisses them in the face afterwards. The best solution to this is to place the litter box where the dog cannot access it such as behind a baby gate or in a closet with the door anchored open (from both sides) just wide enough for the cat. Another solution is a litter box furniture cover that the dog can’t get his head into; see examples on the litter box page. Companies also make furniture specifically for feeding cats that dogs can’t get into. Do a search on the internet and be sure the entry hole is big enough if you have a big cat. Always feed your dog **alone**. Cats should not eat dog food as it may cause dietary deficiencies.



# CATS NEED WET FOOD

By Beth Taylor and Steve Brown

## **The natural diet of cats is meat.**

Cats are meat eaters, designed to thrive on a wide variety of small prey animals, eaten fresh and whole. Their natural diet is high in water and protein, with a moderate amount of fat, and a very low percentage of carbohydrate.

## **Dry cat food is high in grain.**

A diet of dry food is high in carbohydrate, between 35 and 50 percent. "Diet" and "Lite" foods have even more.

Dry food contains almost no water. Dry cat food is convenient to feed, and relatively inexpensive, but it's the opposite of the natural diet of cats. Cats have no dietary need for any carbohydrate.

## **Cats need to get water from their food.**

Cats are descended from feline desert dwellers. They couldn't stroll over to the watering hole for a drink, and cat tongues are not very well designed for drinking water.

Cats are adapted to obtain most of their water from their prey, which contains more than 75 percent water. Cats who eat dry food consume only half the water they need, compared to those that eat wet food, and live in a state of chronic dehydration.

## **The common health problems of cats are related to diet.**

There is increasing evidence, published in peer-reviewed veterinary journals, that many of the health problems seen in cats are the result of diets inappropriate for a feline. Dry, grain-based foods fed to a meat eater, over time, result in both chronic and life-threatening diseases, like these:

**Obesity:** Since cats are designed for a high-protein, moderate-fat, low-carbohydrate diet, it is not surprising that obesity is often seen in cats. Diet cat foods have even more carbohydrate than regular ones, and less fat, so they depart even further from the natural diet of cats, making it harder for them to lose weight.

**Diabetes:** The high level of carbohydrate in dry cat food contributes directly to the development of diabetes in cats. Blood sugar levels rise when cats eat dry food. When this is an ongoing event, insulin-producing cells "downregulate," which leads to diabetes.

**Kidney Disease:** Kidney disease is the most common cause of death for cats. The kidneys require an abundant supply of water to do their job. Without water to process the by-products of the digestion process, the kidneys are overloaded, become damaged over time and unable to do their job.

**Bladder Problems:** Cystitis, bladder irritation and bladder/kidney stone formation are also strongly connected to dehydration. If the body is well hydrated, these problems are minimized.

**Inflammatory Bowel Syndrome and Disease:** These problems are often characterized by vomiting and diarrhea and are very common in cats. Cats who eat a species-appropriate diet rarely suffer from these issues.

**Dental disease:** Dry food has a high sugar (carbohydrate) content, which has been shown to cause dental decay.

For cats to derive any supposed abrasive benefit from dry foods to be seen, they would have to actually chew their dry food. Since dry food shatters in their mouths and they then swallow the pieces, there's no abrasive action from chewing something hard.



Cats who eat dry food often have very severe dental problems. Many factors contribute to dental health, but it is clear that a high-carbohydrate diet is not beneficial!

### **The Solution: An Appropriate Diet for the Species**

It's simple: Cats need to eat a diet that is high in protein and water, with a moderate amount of fat, and almost no carbohydrate.

Most of the health problems we've discussed here are either radically improved or eliminated by eating a diet that meets the needs of a carnivore -- one which closely resembles the nutritional balance provided by a mouse. For example, many veterinarians now treat diabetes in cats with a meat-based canned diet.

We'd like to go a step further, and prevent these diseases.

### **Feed your cat a meat-based diet!**

We suggest you buy canned food that is designed to be complete, or complete frozen diets that have very little vegetable content. No grain sources should be listed in the ingredient panel. There are grain-free canned cat foods that have some vegetables in them, but vegetables should not be a major component (read our article on how to compute these percentages, at this web address: <http://healthypets.mercola.com/sites/healthypets/archive/2010/01/06/whats-the-best-food-for-your-pet.aspx>).

"All meat" diets are just that, and they will not meet your cat's nutritional needs alone.

### **Make the switch successful!**

It sounds simple to just switch your cat's food. After all, meat tastes better than dry food, but your cat may disagree. Dry foods are designed to be tasty, and many cats are addicted to them. Often, cats are not open to the idea of variety, especially if they have only been fed one food (as we have been advised by pet food companies for decades). Creativity and patience may be needed to switch your cat.

Cats will starve themselves, and they are not good candidates for the tough love approach. Some very serious conditions can occur if cats do not eat for an extended period, especially if they are overweight. A slow switch will prevent problems.

### **Here are some ideas to help you along:**

Establish regular feeding times and put food away in between meals. For many reasons, it's best for their bodies not to have food available all the time. If you have dogs, you know what to do with leftovers! Feed multiple cats separately.

Consider dry food to be a snack only, not left out all the time. Leave out just a few pieces as a treat. Consider this the equivalent of "kitty junk food."

Offer bits of other kinds of fresh food that you are eating. They may be refused, but one day, they won't. Your goal is to get your cat to consider things as food other than dry, crunchy items.

Cat whiskers are very sensitive. If food is served in a bowl that interferes with whiskers, it could be enough to keep the cat from considering the food. A flat dish works well.

Cats generally prefer their food between room temperature and body temperature. The dry food cats are used to eating is designed to be very smelly. Warming the food releases the flavors and fragrances. Cats choose food by smell, and wet food is a lot less fragrant than a commercial food they have been eating. This is often the reason that the second half of a can of food is refused: The first time it was room temperature!

Trickery has been known to work with cats. Put the food on your plate, or hide it in a location cats know to be forbidden. When in doubt, creativity helps!

## Additions and Considerations

Add sardines for good fats, or use fish oil. A meal of sardines once a week or one small sardine a day adds omega-3 fatty acids in their best form -- whole food. Because cats can't use plant sources of omega-3s at all, animal sources are necessary. If sardines aren't appealing to you, use a fresh, high-quality omega-3 fish oil supplemented with vitamin E.

Digestive enzymes and a glandular supplement are good additions to replace the parts of prey animals we normally don't feed cats: The stomach contents and smaller glands.

We think that the optimum diet for cats is a raw meat-based diet. However, if you feed your cat a canned diet that approximates the balance of his or her natural diet, their diet will be fully hydrated, and you will be much closer to providing your cat with optimum nutrition.

If you choose to feed a meat-based canned diet, find a way to simulate components lost in cooking or processing.

One way to add live food is with "cat grass," very popular with cats. It's often available in the produce section at the grocery store, or you can grow your own from a kit. This addition often takes the burden off the house plants! Dry "green stuff" is another choice ("Barley Cat" is one product). It takes a very small quantity of a dry product to do the job. Too much can make urine PH too alkaline, and cause some of the problems you're trying to avoid! Tiny pinches of dry green stuff go a long way. Buy organic seeds on internet and plant in planter.

For cats, good diet can make the difference between "Old Age" at 12 and 23. Cats who eat dry food are often old and feel quite ill at 9 or 10. Healthy cats can live a very long time, and that's what we hope for your feline carnivore! Contact Steve or Beth for more information at [bat31@earthlink.net](mailto:bat31@earthlink.net).

### Dr. Mercola's Comment:

There is indeed a special relationship that exists between pets and their owners that goes far beyond the sharing of a home together. Our happy-go-lucky, four-legged friends also provide us with constant unconditional love, devotion, friendship and something else that might not be at the forefront of most people's minds -- health benefits.

If you have a dog, I highly recommend you read their excellent book, ***See Spot Live Longer***. Using philosophies similar to my own regarding the importance of nutrition, See Spot Live Longer presents solid evidence that a good diet is just as important for dogs as it is for us. When fed a proper raw diet appropriate for their body, hundreds of people, including veterinarians, have witnessed vast health improvements in their dogs.

Authors Steve Brown and Beth Taylor, both pet health and nutrition experts, provide an all-inclusive argument for feeding your dog a naturally balanced raw meat, bone and vegetable-based diet that provides much higher quality nutrition than any dry or canned dog or cat food. By convincingly covering all the bases, readers will:

- Review case studies of dogs and cats with chronic illness that improved after fed a healthy diet of fresh food.
- Dispel the myths that are sabotaging your dog's health.
- Learn how the ancestral dog's diet compares to the modern diet dogs eat today.
- Realize the canine anatomical digest process to better understand why and when our animals are at risk from different types of food and potential toxins.
- Find out why dry and canned dog foods may be harming your dog.
- Find out what real fresh foods will protect your dog from cancer and other disease.
- Discover the importance of exercise and how keeping your dog fit will add years to its life.
- Learn practical, cost-effective solutions to feeding your dog better for a longer and healthier life.

**Related Articles (definitely worth reading):**

***Another Great Reason to Throw Out that Dry Cat Food - UC Davis study (2012) -***

- <http://healthypets.mercola.com/sites/healthypets/archive/2012/05/25/wet-cat-food-diet.aspx>

***More Evidence Real Meat is the Right Food for Your Cat -***

- <http://healthypets.mercola.com/sites/healthypets/archive/2012/03/16/protein-in-real-meat-are-better-for-cats.aspx>

***Sardines and Eggs: Natural, Affordable Omega-3 Treats for Your Pet -***

- <http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2005/07/28/pet-omega.aspx>

***Real Food for Healthy Dogs and Cats—Do You Know What's in Your Pet's Food? -***

- <http://healthypets.mercola.com/sites/healthypets/real-food-for-healthy-dogs-and-cats-cookbook.aspx>

***Best Pet Foods for your Dog and Cat -***

- <http://healthypets.mercola.com/sites/healthypets/archive/2011/05/10/my-top-3-pet-food-picks-from-an-upscale-boutique-shop.aspx>

*This article is reprinted from Mercola.com, the world's #1 most visited and trusted natural/alternative health website. You can find this article on the internet at: [http://www.selfgrowth.com/articles/Cats\\_Need\\_Wet\\_Food\\_12085.html](http://www.selfgrowth.com/articles/Cats_Need_Wet_Food_12085.html).*

# Catkins Diet

*Can the 'Catkins Diet' help your tubby tabby? Leading veterinary nutritionists voice their views on this dietary approach.*

By Elissa Wolfson

Some say that pet owners eventually come to resemble their pets. Today, this seems truer than ever before — particularly, around the waistline.

The obesity epidemic sweeping our country affects humans and pets alike. Recent national veterinary studies indicate that more than 25 percent of all house cats qualify as obese — not just overweight.

Indeed, obesity in cats ranks as a “weighty” issue. Cat owners who equate love with food — particularly with poor quality food — may literally be killing their cats with kindness. Feline obesity can lead to a host of diseases, even premature death.

With more cats packing on extra pounds, a new solution is being bantered about. Can fat felines benefit by a low-carbohydrate, high-protein Atkins-type diet — fetchingly dubbed the “Catkins diet”?

## HISTORY OF DANGEROUS DIETS

Before you make any changes to the food you fill in your cat's bowl, veterinary nutritionists emphasize that it is important to understand the evolution of meeting the nutritional needs of cats.

“Cats are not only carnivores by nature. They are obligate carnivores,” says Claudia A. Kirk, DVM, PhD, an associate professor of medicine and nutrition at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville. “This means they require higher levels of protein than most animals and require certain other nutrients present only in meat.”

Domesticated cats have been fed various diets over the decades. Most were developed based upon the pro-



PHOTO BY WENIS HULTO

**Obesity ranks as a major issue among cats, but veterinary nutritional experts are divided regarding the possible benefits of low-carbohydrate, high-protein commercial diets.**

cessing techniques and ingredients available, cost and convenience issues, and a sometimes-limited understanding of the unique physiology of cats.

“To give credit to today's commercially-formulated foods, the micronutrient levels are more consistent and more stable than they are in wild foods,” says Dr. Kirk. “However, certain feline diseases have been related to the formulation of cat foods.”

## YEARS AGO, CAT ATE ORGAN MEATS

Prior to the development of commercial diets, people often fed their cats

organ meats left over from the animals they butchered. These meats ranked generally low in calcium and high in phosphorus, leading to a condition called nutritional secondary hyperparathyroidism. In the 1980s, scientists linked a high incidence of struvite stones to overly-basic (high pH) levels in commercial cat food. Since the late 1980s, when diets were reformulated to be more acidic (low pH) for cats with struvite stones, the incidence of calcium oxalate stones increased. Although studies have consistently associated very low urine pH with oxalate stone risk in cats, other nutritional or animal-





**Cats can pack on extra pounds when they are given food scraps from the table in addition to their regular portions of commercial cat foods.**

related factors appear necessary for stones to occur.

Today's cats — particularly those between seven and 12 years of age — are facing a different problem: an obesity epidemic. Such obesity comes with a high cost.

#### **FAT CATS PRONE TO HEALTH WOES**

Fat cats tend to display a higher incidence of skin disease, caused in part by their inability to clean themselves effectively, due to their size and

reduced mobility. Worse, obesity is associated with urinary tract disease, heart disease, cancer, lameness, and diabetes mellitus.

How does obesity relate to diabetes? Obesity results in a type of insulin resistance. When cats — animals genetically programmed to consume high protein and low carbohydrate — are fed a high-carbohydrate diet, explains Kirk, their blood glucose levels can remain elevated for prolonged periods.

They release more and more insulin in an attempt to bring those glucose levels down. Sustained release of insulin — together with insulin resistance — can eventually lead to diabetes.

Although the sex, age, and activity level of a cat are also factors, food quantity and content contribute significantly to obesity.

"Today's feline obesity is caused largely by the overfeeding of energy-dense foods," says Dr. Kirk. "High-carbohydrate foods may exacerbate this process by increasing the hormonal signals to store fat."

As a result, dietary recommendations for cats are changing. In the past, weight-management diets have focused on calorie and fat reduction, but still tended to be high in carbohydrates. Today's carbohydrate-fed kitties might do better on a high-protein, low-carbohydrate diet more appropriate to their species-specific nutritional needs — in other words, a Catkins diet.

#### **WHAT'S IN A MOUSE?**

The body composition of a mouse can provide some guidelines.

"While dry foods contain only 10 percent moisture, prey would contain between 65 to 80 percent," says Dr. Kirk. "And while most dry food contains between 25 to 50 percent carbohydrates, a typical mouse would contain less than 10 percent."

What happens to those excess carbs when consumed? While carbohydrates can provide a source of energy for cats that exercise regularly, this food source presents limitations in glucose — metabolizing enzymes in cats, because they have difficulty processing carbohydrates.

"In most sedentary cats, excess carbohydrates are converted to triglycerides and then stored as fat in the cat's body," says Dr. Kirk. "Also, cats have very low levels of glucokinase — the enzyme that mops up excess sugar in humans. Since they are slow to get rid of the excess glucose, this turns on the metabolic

switch (insulin) too convert excess carbohydrates to fat."

Another concern: Extra carbs can translate into extra calories.

One study, "Comparison of a Low-Carbohydrate Versus High-Fiber Diet in Cats With Diabetes Mellitus," conducted by researchers at Colorado State University and The Animal Medical Center in New York City, attempted to determine whether a low-carbohydrate or a high-fiber diet was more effective in the management of diabetes mellitus in cats. Thirty client-owned cats with naturally-occurring diabetes mellitus were randomly assigned to receive a low-carbohydrate diet or a high-fiber diet for four months.

By the end of the study, 41 percent of the cats on the high-fiber food versus 68 percent on the low-carb food were able to discontinue insulin. While glucose control among the cats remaining on insulin was not different, the likelihood of discontinuing insulin was approximately four-fold greater in cats fed the low-carb food.

These results are consistent with a Purina DM experiment, in which a significant number of cats fed low-



PHOTO BY WENDY HARTO

**Experts report that excess levels of carbohydrates in cat foods can provide a source of energy for cats who exercise regularly. But these carbs can be stored as fat in sedentary cats and lead to possible obesity.**

satiated," says Dr. Kirk.

She recalls several individual cases.

"One of our staff had a 14-pound

Veterinary Nutritionists. "You will not get weight loss using a high-protein, high-fat diet unless you reduce the total calorie intake. Simply

*'Feeding a low-carbohydrate diet will not result in effective weight control if it is provided and eaten in excess.'*

carb diets reverted to a non-diabetic state.

Dr. Kirk has seen some convincing results, particularly for obese, diabetic cats that needed regular injections of insulin.

#### **HIGH-PROTEIN FIGHTS DIABETES**

"Following treatment with low-carbohydrate, high-protein diets, about half of these cats went into remission and no longer needed insulin injections. In another study, overweight cats lost weight gradually — about one to two percent of their body weights each week. These diets not only resulted in sustained weight loss, but also in normalization of appetite because they appeared to be

diabetic cat. Since this was a rather aggressive cat, the owner was not looking forward to administering insulin injections. But once we put the cat on a low-carb diet, he began to lose weight. Now he no longer needs insulin, and is on his way to achieving his ideal weight of 11 pounds."

But Rebecca Remillard, PhD, DVM, a veterinary nutritionist at Angell Animal Medical Center in Boston, and a member of the Tufts advisory board, is skeptical about the benefits resulting from a low-carb diet.

"The whole premise is incorrect. It's marketing hype," says Dr. Remillard, former past president of the American Association of

changing carbohydrates for protein does not get you weight loss. Weight loss and managing diabetes...is not the same thing."

While Dr. Kirk believes carbohydrate levels of less than 15 percent in food can help individual cats maintain ideal weight, as well as manage diabetes, she and Dr. Remillard do agree on one point: the success of any diet depends largely upon reducing total calorie intake.

#### **AVOID EXCESSIVE FEEDING**

"Feeding a low-carbohydrate diet will not result in effective weight control if it is provided and eaten in excess," says Dr. Kirk. "All cats are different, and a low-carb diet may



**Cats are obligate carnivores by nature, which means that they require higher levels of protein than dogs. This cat is caught dangerously nibbling on a raw chicken.**

not be right for every cat. While weight loss can be easier for some cats on low-carb diets, others do better on low-fat, high-fiber foods. Unfortunately, there is no easy means to determine which cat is which."

#### GOING FROM FLABBY TO FIT

If you do want to reduce your cat's carbohydrates, you might wonder if you need to share your steak dinner or shop for mice. A high-protein, high-fat, low-carbohydrate diet for your cat does not necessarily involve extra fuss — and prime rib or rodents are not required. Suitable cat foods can be found at your veterinarian's

office, as well as in the pet food aisle of your local supermarket.

High-protein, low-carb commercial diets available on the grocery shelf typically include canned foods designed for growth and gourmet-type foods. Foods designed especially for diabetic cats come in both dry and canned formulations. Two diets available by prescription include Purina's Veterinary Diet DM®, which contains only 12 percent carbohydrates; and Hill's Feline Prescription Diet m/d®, which contains less than 15 percent carbohydrates.

When shopping for quality cat

food, Dr. Kirk recommends that pet owners read cat food labels carefully. Several canned cat foods better mimic an all-prey diet. Hill's® Science Diet® Feline Growth, Pedigree® Sheba, and some Fancy Feast® canned foods all contain primarily meat products. Grains are generally absent or low down on the labels of low-carbohydrate canned foods, notes Dr. Kirk.

Generally, most canned foods are lower in carbohydrates than dry foods.

"Cats that eat only dry food are getting low-moisture, calorie-dense meals," says Dr. Kirk. "And, unlike catching prey, they don't have to exercise to obtain this food."

Dry food brings some disadvantages, too.

"Not all dry foods are good for teeth," says Dr. Kirk. "It depends on the formula. Any food (canned or dry) that is sticky can promote tartar and gingivitis. A bigger disadvantage to dry food is the low water consumption, particularly in cats prone to urinary tract stones."

According to Dr. Kirk, a little nutritional know-how, and a lot of common sense can go a long way toward helping your cat look less like Garfield and more like the sleek feline gods once worshipped by the ancient Egyptians. 🐾

*Elissa Wolfson is a regular contributor to Catnip and lives in Ithaca, New York.*

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# CATS NEED WATER

Text published in [Eating and Nutrition](#), on the internet in 2012. Photos are of rescued and now adopted cats.

Every life process relies on [water](#). The body of the cat is made up of about 70% water. The natural prey that cats would catch also contain approximately that same amount of water. Many people are under the false assumption that cats don't need water or that they're afraid of it. The cat's ancestors came from a desert environment and relied on getting adequate amounts of water in the food they ate.

Modern day cats eat lots of dry food\* which has very low water content (about 10%) and so they need an additional water supply in the form of a separate water bowl.

Cats who consume wet food get much of the water they need within that food (canned food contains approximately 78% water) but also still greatly benefit from a separate water supply. A cat eating a diet of canned and dry food also must have a separate water supply.

If you feed dry food to your cat don't try to increase the water content by wetting the food because it often makes it much less palatable to the cat. Instead, talk to your veterinarian about adding some canned food into the diet. There are ways to gradually transition your cat to canned food. ([See article, Cat's Need Wet Food.](#))

*Rescue's Note: Eating ONLY dry food is NOT good for your cat. In fact many vets believe it's the cause of most health problems.*

## Use the Right Type of Water Bowl

Cats need to have access to fresh water at all times. To ensure that your cat is drinking enough water, use a water bowl that is an appropriate size for your cat and maintain a consistent

level of water in it. Don't use a huge bowl filled with water as a way of only having to fill it once a week because the water will get stale, dirty and contaminated. Use a bowl that will hold a day's water. Every day, wash the bowl with soapy water, thoroughly rinse it and refill with fresh water. Don't just refill the water bowl without washing it because the water will taste bad and can become contaminated.

Gravity-feed water\* and food bowls\* are also very popular with pet parents. The one problem with the water container though is that the water can get stale. If you do decide to use a gravity-feed dispenser, you still need to regularly change the water



and completely clean the dispenser and reservoir.

If you aren't sure which type of bowl is best, offer a few different shapes and sizes so your cat will have the choice.



## Keep Water Separate From Food

To avoid contamination from food, don't use a double feeder that has food on one side and

*Rescue's Note: We do NOT recommend these feeders.*

water on the other. It's too easy for food particles to drop into the water. Additionally, many cats don't like having their food and water close together. Some cats won't drink water if it's too close to their food source.

### Monitor Your Cat's Water Intake

Another benefit of filling the water bowl each day is that it enables you to better monitor how much or how little water your cat is drinking. If you notice a sudden increase or decrease, it can indicate a potential health issue. For example, an increase in water consumption may be a sign of renal failure or diabetes. The sooner you're alerted to the change in water intake, the sooner your cat will be diagnosed and receive appropriate veterinary care.

You may also notice a change in the urine output of your cat. Any change in litter box habits or the amount or frequency of your cat's urination could indicate a potential medical problem. Consult your veterinarian if you notice a change. If your cat does get a diagnosis of something such as feline lower urinary tract disease, renal failure or diabetes, she'll need to drink adequate amounts of water to help flush toxins. Since she'll be drinking more water you may have to increase the number of water bowls or refill them more often.

### No Milk

Milk is not a replacement for water. If you offer your cat milk instead of water she will become dehydrated. Many cats are also lactose intolerant after weaning so you'll potentially end up with kitty having diarrhea which can also lead to dehydration. *Goat milk is good for cats, if you want to give them a treat.)*



### Outdoor Cats

Weather can play a role in the increase or decrease in water consumption. Your cat may drink more in hot weather. With outdoor cats, make sure there is always a fresh supply of water always available and that you monitor and clean the bowl daily. In hot weather, place the bowl in the shade. In cold weather, make sure the water doesn't freeze.

### Multiple Locations

In multicat environments it's a good idea to have more than one water source (as well as more than one feeding station). Position water bowls around the house so that one cat doesn't have to cross another cat's area in order to get to the water. This is especially important in homes where there is any tension between the cats.

### Pet Water Fountains

If you're concerned that your cat may not be drinking enough water, try installing a pet water fountain. There are multiple types available. Some look like water fountains and some create a bubbling action. Your cat may have a preference. Since many cats like playing with the water droplets at the kitchen or bathroom faucet, offer the water fountain as a better alternative. Some fountains have flow regulators so you can adjust the water speed. Just as with a regular



water bowl, make sure you keep the fountain clean. If you're concerned about kitty making a mess with water all over the floor, you can buy placemats with raised edges that will keep any spills contained.

If you don't mind that your cat is on the counter you can also install a motion-activated faucet so the water will flow whenever kitty is near it.



## Other Ways to Entice Your Cat to Drink Water

Cats love to play and since so many like to play with water, try dropping an ice cube in the water bowl. Your cat may enjoy batting the cube around and in the process, begin repeatedly licking her wet paw. You can also freeze a little low-sodium chicken broth in plastic ice cube trays and then periodically drop one into the bowl. If you do this, make sure you also have an additional bowl available with just plain water so your cat will have a choice.



## Water Preferences

Your cat may not care whether she drinks tap water or bottled water but if she's not drinking enough water, provide bowls with different types of water until you discover her preference.

<http://www.catbehaviorassociates.com/category/health/cat-eating-and-nutrition/>

*Pam Johnson-Bennett, CCBC, PCBC is a Certified Cat Behavior Consultant and best-selling author of 8 books. Her ground-breaking “[Think Like a Cat](#)” approach to cat behavior has been featured and profiled in numerous magazines and television shows.*

## BITING AND SCRATCHING

When cats become overly excited during play with humans, they usually bite and start to scratch.

This is the same action two kittens or a mama cat



and kitten will display when playing. Kittens learn from their mama or siblings not to bite hard or scratch since it hurts them when mama bites back. I have seen Mama cats do this to teach their kittens not to bite. Kittens say, “ouch!” and stops biting.

If your kitty didn’t learn this from her mama or siblings you need to teach her.

**Whenever your cat gets her claws out, stop the play session.** This often causes the cat to retract her claws. If she does so, praise the cat and resume playing. If not, sternly say, “No”. At this stage, the cat will not understand what you are saying, but she will soon learn. The play session will not resume until kitty puts her claws away. If she does not, just walk away and ignore her.

**Whenever the cat bites too hard, let her know that she is hurting you by shouting, “OUCH!”** Walk away and end the play session immediately. Cats, especially kittens, love to play and they love to play with their owners. Ending a play session is an extremely effective punishment. The cat soon learns that it is her own rough behavior that causes an abrupt end of an enjoyable play session.

**Provide your cat with acceptable ways to expend her energy and act out her predatory nature.** Tie a feather or piece of crumpled paper to a length of string and run around the house dragging it behind. This gives kitty a moving target to chase and attack.

My favorite cat toy is one called “Da Bird”. It is feathers tied on to a small fishing pole with a fishing lure so when it moves through the air it twirls like a real bird. I guarantee you, your cat will feel like a mighty hunter! (Do a search at YouTube.com for Da Bird and you will see lots of happy cats playing with them.)



**Let your cat pounce on and play with her own toys instead of your hands or feet.** Do NOT allow it when they are tiny kittens or they will continue to do it as an adult. If you want to let her play with your hands then buy special gloves so the kitten does not associate her opponent with an arm or hand. You can find a variety of these in any pet store.



**Train your cat to climb** her scratching post by tossing toys on the top of it. **Train her to fetch.** Sit across the room or at the top of stairs and toss a toy, when your kitty picks it up, call her to you and give her a treat (reward) for retrieving it. **Give your cat active and regular play sessions and she will be less likely to bite and scratch you.**

**NEVER SPANK OR HIT YOUR CAT, this only make her fear you, she doesn’t learn a different behavior.**

# How to Manage Your Cat and its Claws

Your cat will be much happier with its claws, and will want to use them. Fortunately, there are some simple steps in claw management that you can take to ensure that you and your cat remain happy.

Effective claw management involves three basic principles:

## ***1. Give your cat something good to scratch.***

Scratching posts are the foundation of a good claw management strategy. Every house should have at least one vertical scratching post, and the more the merrier. The post should be at least 28 inches tall in order for your cat to do a full stretch. It should have a large base so it doesn't tip over easily. The surface should provide resistance to claws being pulled through - the most common surfaces are sisal rope, tight-weave carpet or bear wood. A mixture of textures is best.

From the cat's perspective, there's nothing quite like a floor-to-ceiling, multi-tiered cat tree, as it serves as a scratching post, playground and bed. They are expensive, but they last a lot longer than smaller posts and will make both your cat and you much more happy. On the other end of the economical spectrum, horizontal cardboard scratch boxes are excellent scratching toys as well. Your best bet is a combination of all of the above. Try using catnip to mark acceptable scratching surfaces, or scratch it yourself to show how it's done.

Location is also important. Cats like to scratch when they make their grand entrance into a room, so it is a good idea to place scratching surfaces near doors. If your cat is ignoring a perfectly good scratching post, move it a couple of feet - this can make all the difference, for

reasons that are a complete mystery to anybody who doesn't have the mind of a cat.

## ***2. Teach your cat which surfaces are not acceptable to scratch***

Cats can be fairly particular about what they scratch. If you train your cat early to use the appropriate surfaces and avoid the inappropriate ones (furniture, legs, etc.), they will learn and be much less inclined to stray from their good habits.

The best way to teach a cat not to scratch something is by using a combination of positive and negative reinforcement. Negative reinforcement can include a squirt with a spray bottle filled with water, saying "no!" in a loud, disapproving way, shaking a can filled with pebbles or pennies, and even temporarily isolating the cat in a bathroom or other such space if it misbehaves. Positive reinforcement includes stroking, talking in a calm, approving voice, giving treats and otherwise showering the cat with positive attention. Be consistent with your reinforcement - you won't teach your cat anything by sending mixed messages.

You can also protect furniture by making it unappealing as a scratching surface - by temporarily cover the furniture with a sheet, slipcover or double-sticky tape.

## ***3. Keep your cat's nails trimmed or capped***

Regularly clipping your cat's nails will greatly reduce its ability to cause damage with its claws, and if done properly will not hurt the cat. It is best to use a trimmer designed for cat's claws rather than a scissors or human nail clipper.

If none of these are effective, you can always put SoftPaws on your cat's front nails. SoftPaws are small vinyl caps that are glued onto a cat's claws and serve as dull sheaths. They last for four-six weeks, are easy to use and replace and don't hurt the cat. They also come in different colors. SoftPaws are sold at veterinarians' and also over-the-counter at many pet stores. If you buy them at your vet, bring your cat and have them put on so you can see how it is done.

*Adapted from Gary Loewenthal, "Why Cats Need Claws," THE WHOLE CAT JOURNAL, September 2002.*





## CAT SCRATCHERS



Your cat will be heaven in one of these huge cat trees

## SAVE FURNITURE

...or happy with a small one that is great for looking out windows



Small but sturdy -- these will be used

...in love in a medium tree with plenty of places to play and nap



...posts are good if stable, look for a good base.

**Have all three**  
- **Carpet**  
- **Rope**  
- **Cardboard**



...cardboard scratchers are a must have!



...and if you want to be very creative, turn art into cat trees, visit [www.thecatshouse.com](http://www.thecatshouse.com)



## TRIMMING YOUR CAT'S CLAWS

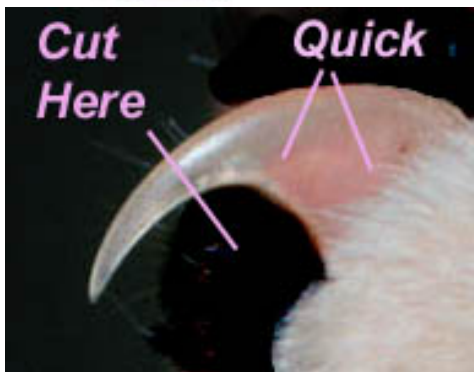
If possible start training your cat to have her claws trimmed as a kitten. Gently stroke your cat's paws often, getting her used to having her paws held before you attempt trimming. Be sure to reward your cat with a special food treat—one that she receives only during claw trimming or some other grooming procedure—during or immediately after trimming. The best time to trim your cat's claws is when she is relaxed or sleepy. **Never try to give a pedicure right after a stressful experience or an energetic round of play.**

Your cat should be resting comfortably on your lap, the floor, or a table. Hold a paw in one hand and press a toe pad gently to extend the claw.

The “quick” is the pink tissue on the inside of the claw. Avoid the quick when you trim the claw; cutting into it will cause pain and bleeding. You want to remove the sharp tip below the quick & away from the toe.

If your cat becomes impatient, take a break and try again later. Even if you can clip only a claw or two a day, eventually you'll complete the task.

Because cats do little damage with their rear claws and do a good job of keeping them trim themselves—by chewing them—many cat owners never clip the rear claws. Others trim their cats' rear claws three or four times a year or have them done by their veterinarian or a professional groomer.



Gently press the cat's toe pads to reveal sharp claws in need of a trim.

Notice the pink tissue (the quick) on the inside of the claw. Avoid the quick when you trim the claw; cutting into it will cause pain and bleeding. Remove the sharp tip below the quick (away from the toe), clipping about halfway between the end of the quick and the tip of claw. In the beginning clip just the very tip until you are more comfortable cutting a little more.

If you accidentally clip into the quick, don't panic. The claw may bleed for a moment, but it will usually stop very quickly. Soothe your cat by speaking softly to her and stroking her head. If the bleeding hasn't stopped after a minute or so, touch a styptic pencil to the claw end or pat on styptic powder or corn starch to help staunch the bleeding.

How often you need to clip your cat's claws depends somewhat on how much of the tip you remove, but usually a clipping every two weeks or even once a month will suffice. If your cat absolutely refuses to allow you to clip its claws, get help from your veterinarian or a professional groomer.

Special claw trimmers (two types are shown) are available from veterinarians or pet supply stores, but sharp nail clippers for humans also work. Keep a styptic (astringent) pencil or powder on hand in case you accidentally clip into the quick and bleeding hasn't stopped within a couple of minutes.



Reprinted from: <http://www.declawing.com/htmls/trimming.htm>



# Important Information About Declawing

## What is Declawing?

Declawing is an irreversible surgical procedure that involves amputating the last joint of a cat's toes. It is much more invasive than simply removing a nail, as it is commonly (and mistakenly) perceived.

A cat's claw is not like a human fingernail. It is part of the last bone (distal phalanx) in a cat's toe. In order to declaw a cat, the entire phalanx must be amputated - including the bone, nerve, joint capsule, collateral ligaments and tendons. The procedure is extremely painful and debilitating; it is comparable to cutting off a person's finger at the last joint of each finger.

## A Cat and its Claws

Cats need their claws for a multitude of reasons. They use them for balance, exercising, and stretching the muscles in their legs, back, shoulders and paws. Cats walk on their toes, and not on the pads of their feet. By changing the shape of a cat's feet, declawing not only drastically alters a cat's balance, but it causes them to meet the ground at an unnatural angle, resulting in back and muscle pain which becomes

increasingly debilitating as the cat ages.

Cats also use their front claws as their primary defense. Even indoor cats need them, as they are only one accident away from being outside and completely defenseless - and unable to climb to safety.

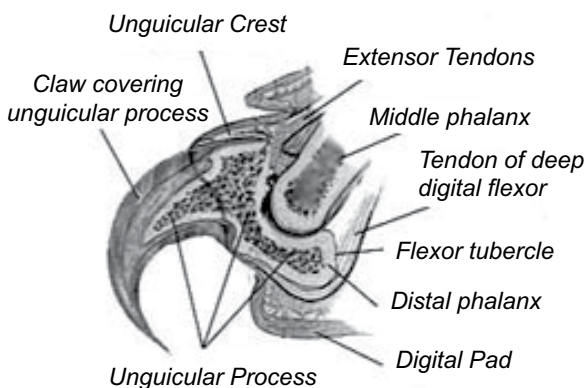
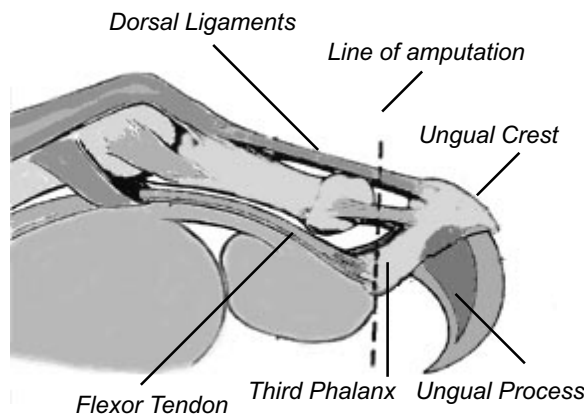
## Complications and Behavior

As declawing is such an invasive procedure, it has a relatively high rate of complication. Typical complications from the amputation are

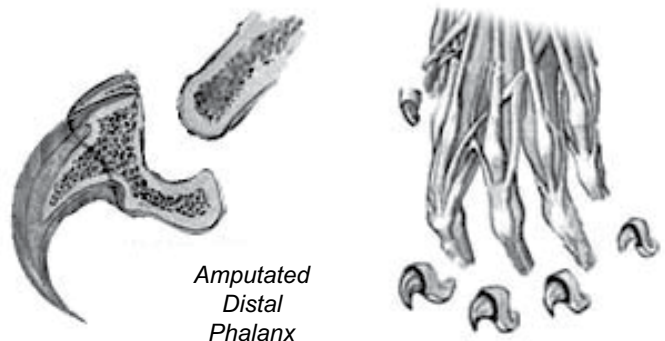
excruciating pain, damage to the radial nerve, infection, hemorrhage, bone chips that prevent healing, painful regrowth of deformed claw inside of the paw (and invisible to the eye), lameness due to wound infection or footpad laceration, abscesses, and

abnormal growth of severed nerve ends which can cause long-term pain.

And these are only the physical complications. Declawing can also cause severe psychological and behavioral complications. Many cats who were lively and friendly prior to the operation become withdrawn and introverted



After Declawing



***Countries in which declawing cats is either illegal or considered extremely inhumane and only performed under extreme circumstances.***

England  
Scotland  
Wales  
Italy  
France  
Germany  
Austria  
Switzerland  
Norway  
Sweden  
Netherlands

Northern Ireland  
Ireland  
Denmark  
Finland  
Slovenia  
Portugal  
Belgium  
Spain  
Brazil  
Australia  
New Zealand

Declawing is now banned in Los Angeles, Beverly Hills, Santa Monica, San Francisco, Berkeley, Burbank, Culver City and West Hollywood on the basis of animal cruelty. The two leading national animal protection organizations in the US, the Humane Society of the United States and the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, strongly discourage or condemn the procedure.

after the procedure. Others become nervous and fearful as a reaction to losing their primary defense, or even overly aggressive, compensating for the lack of claws by using their only remaining means of defense - their teeth. Some declawed cats' feet become so tender that they associate their new pain with the litterbox, resulting in a life-long aversion to using the box. Others mark their territory with urine since they can no longer mark with their claws. Many declawed cats that are dumped in animal shelters are turned in due to these kinds of behavioral problems that developed only after their owner declawed them.

In addition, declawing can so traumatize a cat that the stress results in other secondary health and behavioral problems, including a weakened immune system, chronic diarrhea and irritable bowel syndrome.

### **Ethical and Humane Considerations**

The physical and psychological impacts of declawing are staggering enough. But a loving pet owner should also consider the ethical and humane issues raised by declawing. Is it appropriate to painfully amputate an essential part of a cat's "catness" in order to fit the owner's lifestyle and convenience? Are inanimate objects

(furniture) that much more important to a person than the physical and emotional well being of their animal companion? Many countries have said no and outlawed the procedure, and as public awareness of the impacts of declawing grow, more and more cities in America are doing or considering doing the same.



***Please, don't declaw!***

# Declawing: Another Veterinarian's Perspective



By: Michael W. Fox, D.Sc.,  
Ph.D., B.Vet.Med., M.R.C.V.S.

## Say No!

### To De-clawing Cats

Many veterinarians routinely de-claw young cats. It's part of the package when they come in to be spayed/neutered. Many cats suffer as a consequence. The operation entails more than simply removing the claws, (onychectomy) under general anesthesia. It entails removal of the first digit (digitectomy). It's like you having your toes and fingers removed at the first joint, i.e. a radical phalangectomy.

Cats are very dexterous, and this operation essentially eliminates their dexterity, greatly reducing their behavioral repertoire when it comes to grasping and holding. It also hampers their ability to groom and scratch themselves normally. Their ability and self-confidence when it comes to climbing and general agility are similarly crippled. Their first line of defense—their retractable claws—is eliminated, which could make some cats more anxious and defensive.

De-clawed cats tend to walk abnormally back on their heels rather than on their entire pads because of the chronic pain at the end of their severed fingers and toes. They often develop chronic arthritis and as the front toe pads shrink, chronic bone infections are common.

Many cats find it painful to use the litter box, develop a conditioned aversion to using the box, and become un-housebroken. This is why many de-clawed cats are put up for adoption or

are euthanized. They may also bite more, and become defensive when handled because their paws are hurting and infected.

I strongly advise all prospective cat owners, and those people with cats who are contemplating having the entire first digit—not simply trim the claw—removed surgically from their cats' paws—never to have this operation performed on their felines.

Cats need their claws to be cats, and the routine surgical amputation of all their first digits is considered unthinkable in the UK and many other countries where people love and respect their cats. They know that properly handled and socialized cats quickly learn not to scratch people, and will learn to enjoy using a scratch post and not destroy upholstered furniture.

According to the Paw Project ([www.pawproject.org](http://www.pawproject.org)), de-clawing has become extremely common in the US and Canada in the past three decades. Before that time, it was rarely performed. In most countries, de-clawing is considered unethical and is not performed by veterinarians.

De-clawing is illegal in many countries, including Italy, Spain, England, Scotland, Wales, Austria, Croatia, Malta, Israel, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Netherlands, France, Germany, Greece, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Sweden, Switzerland, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Slovenia, Brazil, Turkey and New Zealand.

*Rescue's Note: What do vets in other parts of the world know that our vets ignore?*

Part of being a cat is to have claws. Out of respect for the nature of cats and their basic behavioral requirements in the confined domestic environment, caring and responsible cat owners effectively train their cats to use scratch-posts, scratch-boards and carpeted “condos” rather than resort to routine declawing, that amounts to a mutilation for convenience.

## **FURTHER OBSERVATIONS**

From the perspectives of naturalistic philosophy and ethics, as defined in Buddhism and Taoism, the cat’s ritualistic claw-scratching to mark the territorial domain is a vital yogic practice that helps cats relax and discharge pent up energies. Ethologically, cats’ need to scratch suitable vertical and semi-vertical objects with their claw-marks and paw-pad pheromones is motivated by the desire for safety and security in a regularly marked, familiar territory. Scratch-post sites are tied to self-identity and recognition: self-awareness.

I have observed feral and free-roaming cats, and indoor cats all engaging in scratch-post-marking behavior, and to take this ritual away from them by de-clawing is to rob them both physically and psychologically of their first line of defense in a potentially hostile world; and of their ability to even be able to mark their territories effectively. So many begin to urine-spray-mark, or show behavioral changes associated with increased fear and vulnerability.

Cats are fastidious self-groomers, and they need their claws to be able to groom themselves properly. Unable to groom themselves, cats become more irritable, tense, depressed.

These problems are compounded by the chronic pain that many de-clawed cats suffer, and show lameness and abnormal vertebral and postural mis-alignments due to paw-pad pain from abnormal weight distribution on certain pads, and also from chronic inflammation, post-surgical infection, chronic arthritis and osteomyelitis, and contractions of the flexor tendons.

Such physical and psychological crippling of cats has become an accepted cultural norm. But such perverse defilement of the cat’s nature, her ethos, such mutilation, rationalized disfigurement as a necessary convenience, is a sad reflection of our humanity, or lack thereof. Both must be addressed, and all veterinary colleges censored where de-clawing is taught to students with the expectation that this would be a routine source of income because of public demand, and if vets were not around to do it properly, many people would resort to using wire-cutters.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Performing phalangectomies on cats as a routine preventive measure, just in case they might scratch people or damage furniture, is a service of convenience to cat owners that I consider professionally unethical for veterinarians to offer and perform as a routine procedure on all cats that come through their doors. It is nothing less than a mutilation that takes away from cats an integral part of what makes them cats---a form of physical deprivation with often profound behavioral and psychological ramifications, the risks of which far outweigh the benefits to uninformed cat owners and lovers.

Many veterinarians argue that it is a life-saving procedure because otherwise cats who might damage furniture or scratch their owners



are often euthanized if they are not de-clawed. I see this as engaging in self-serving emotional blackmail, financial interests notwithstanding.

As a profession, are we not giving a mixed message to the public in advocating companion animal health and welfare on the one hand, and not abandoning such practices that are considered unethical by veterinarians and their clients in many other countries?



*Article basis for letter to Dr. Fox's colleagues, published in the Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association, Feb. 15, 2006, pages 503-504.*

*Michael W. Fox, D.Sc., Ph.D., B.Vet.Med., M.R.C.V.S.*

*Visit his website for more information: [www.twobitdog.com/DrFox](http://www.twobitdog.com/DrFox)*



*Just declawed - pain - fear - terror - sadness*

*This is a cat after surgery for declawing. It's how they all feel and that is why some vets keep the cat for several days to administer pain medicines so the owners don't see how much pain their cat is in.*

*Rescue's Note: Our experience is that cat's are NOT dumped for scratching but instead because of some of the problems declawing creates such as not using the litter box and biting.*

*Companies now make products like Soft Paws and can be bought in almost every pet store or Vets office. These are soft plastic caps that can be put on nails if all training fails to stop your cat from scratching.*



*Our experience is cat owners don't invest in things the cats like to scratch but get some cheap flimsy scratching post and expect the cat to use it, so the cat turns to the couch that is sturdy or a wicker hamper with a surface they like.*

## BEATING BOREDOM

### *Tips on keeping your cat happy and engaged*

There is ample evidence that cats who spend their lives entirely indoors live much longer than their outdoor-only counterparts. But keeping an indoor cat happy as well as healthy means providing more than just good nutrition and regular veterinary care-you must also enrich your kitty's environment. Eliciting a cat's natural behaviors with hunting and foraging games can do wonders for your companion's well-being.

With a little creativity, you can keep your cat stimulated and interested, even in a small apartment and on a limited budget. And the good news is that enrichment research has shown that toys that are removed and then returned after several weeks regain much of their novelty; extend your enrichment budget by rotating your cat's toys regularly. Get started with a few of these feline friendly activities, but begin slowly and be sure to get a thumbs up from kitty's veterinarian.

**Foraging Fun** - Separate each day's food rations into small batches. Place the clusters around the house and then toss a few small treats in random directions. Not only will this encourage active foraging, it'll also keep kitty from scarfing down her food too quickly.

**Pleasurable Puzzles** - Toss a few treats into a square Rubbemaide bottle and leave it on the floor with the lid off for a great beginner puzzle. Any plastic container with a secure lid can become a hanging puzzle. Just cut two or three slots around the bottom outer edge of the container and place a few treats in the center. String a cord through the lid and hang this puzzle over a doorknob. Once your cat gets the hang of it, you can encourage exercise by raising it higher.

**Scent Searching** - Use old socks as washable scent baits. Just mark the sock with a dab of perfume, lotion, vanilla extract or even peanut butter, or place a pinch of any aromatic spice inside, then rub it over a slice of lunchmeat to pick up the scent. Scatter the socks throughout the house and your cat will be on the prowl for hours, delighted by the variety of scents. If you're pressed for time, simply mark a scent trail with a bit of cheese and then hide the cheese at the end of the trail. Catnip is another scent you can use as bait.

**Bird Watching** - Attach a bird feeder outside your cat's favorite window. Hungry birds will provide hours of entertainment. Don't place feeders too close to the ground as it leaves birds vulnerable to enemy attacks, and be sure to keep the window closed-excited cats can push right through screens.

**Mouse Trap** - Leave a ping-pong ball in the bathtub and watch as your cat makes it sail around the curves during her hunt for the elusive orb.

**Crafty Cardboard** - Use cardboard boxes as beds, dens, tunnels and mazes, Costco fruit and vegetable boxes are sturdy and free. Make a "busy box" by attaching small toys to short lengths of cord and suspending them from the ceiling of a large box. Cut window flaps in the den at various heights. Add a "Tiger Tug," a miniature version of a game popular with both tigers and chimps. Feed both ends of a length of parachute cord into the box through small holes. Tie a toy or a large knot on each end. When the cat tugs at one end, the other end mysteriously comes to life. For multicat households, run the ends into separate boxes.



**Cat TV** - Buy DVDs aimed at cats and also DVDs on birds, like the Audubon Society makes, they entertain cats for hours.

# Creating the Purrfect Haven

*So you think you have the perfect cat? Here are some feline-friendly ways to make her life with you that much better.*

By Arden Moore

Perhaps you're one of the lucky ones. Your cat always selects the scratching post—not your sofa—when it's time for claw sharpening and stretching. She always uses the litter box and never makes a mess elsewhere in your house.

Jump on your kitchen counters? Shimmy up your curtain sheers? Never. You don't need to engage in daily battle of wills to give a pill for a chronic condition, make frequent visits to the veterinarian due to constant cat fights, or book time with an animal behaviorist to try to identify and conquer your cat's latest perplexing problem. Each time you arrive home, you're greeted by full-throttle purrs and soft-eyed winks. And Sunday mornings, your cat politely lets you sleep in late and is happy to receive brunch rather than breakfast at dawn.

Face it: You've been extremely blessed to share your home with a low-maintenance cat, a push-button cat, a problem-free cat. But don't push your luck, experts caution.

"Too many cats with no behavior problems—the ones that get fed twice a day, get their litter boxes cleaned daily—may just walk around all day feeling a bit bored and ignored," says Nicholas Dodman, BVMS, MRCVS, director of the Behavior Clinic at Tufts University School of Veterinary Medicine, North Grafton, Mass. "Cats deserve to be treated more than mere window dressing. All cats need and deserve regular mental and physical stimulation."

Catnip asked advice from three experts on ways to convert homes



*An indoor lifestyle is certainly safer for our cats. But to keep her truly happy, you may need to enhance all the things that she considers important.*

into havens for good cats without forcing you to take out a second mortgage or spend hours catering to their needs. In addition to Dr. Dodman, the experts include Tracy McFarland, DVM, a veterinarian specializing in feline medicine who operates The Cat Doctor clinic in Santa Clarita, CA, and Suzanne Hetts, PhD, a certified applied animal behavior from Littleton, CO, who has helped thousands of frustrated owners resolve cat and dog behavior problems.

From the perspective of a cat, our experts offer this Top 10 List of Ultimate Cat Pampering:

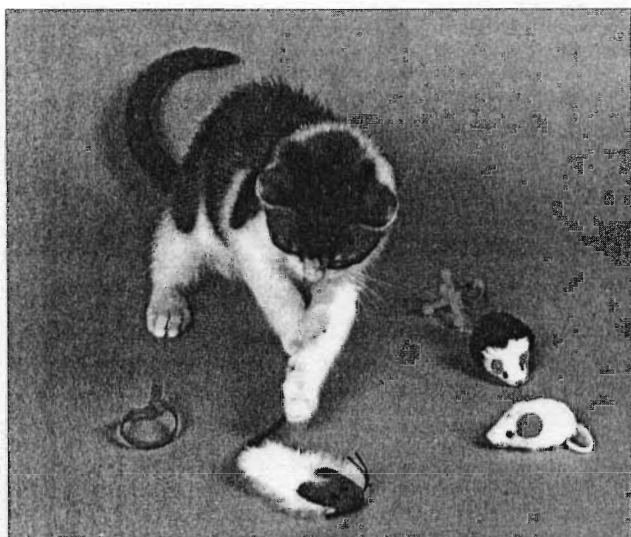
**1. Tidy bathrooms.** "A dirty litter box is a major pet peeve for cats," says Dr. McFarland. "If you've been fortunate to never experience a litter box

issue, you should bow down to your cat every day. They deserve a litter box that is scooped every day—and more than one box if there is more than one cat in the household."

## PURRRECTING YOUR CAT'S LIFE

- ◆ All cats need regular mental and physical stimulation.
- ◆ A regularly cleaned litter box may be one of the 'nicest' things you can do for your cat.
- ◆ Provide a safe sanctuary for when neighbors or noisy kids drop by. Give Kitty privacy.
- ◆ Pet your cat the way she likes to be stroked. Her body language will tell you what's best.





**Play is important, but don't just provide a bunch of toys. Interaction with you is important, too.**

Feline perks: Locate the litter box in a private but well-ventilated area of your home. And select a type of litter that your cat prefers, not one that's simply on sale.

"You need to balance privacy with accessibility, and to provide escape routes for cats sharing homes with other cats, dogs, or children so that your cat can see out from the litter box and not be ambushed," says Dr. Hetts. "Keep the depth of the litter between 1-1/2 and 2 inches, and test different litters. Most cats seem to prefer the finer grain clumping litters." (And some *hate* scented.)

**2. Fresh water.** Treat your well-mannered cat to fresh water daily—ideally bottled or filtered water from your tap. "Ask yourself, would you drink the water? If the water is good enough for you to drink, than it is good enough for your cat," says Dr. Dodman. (See more on 'water' on page 19.)

**3. On-time meals.** "Cats are creatures of routine, and meal time is one of the high points of their day," says Dr. McFarland. "Make your cat happy by trying to feed at the same time each day as much as possible." If you can't be home to serve food, consider getting a timer dish that can be set for on-time servings. Or ask a friend or

pet sitter to step in as a surrogate chef for your hungry cat.

**4. Treat feast.** The fishier the smell, the better for your cat—like bits of tuna, chicken or a store-bought treat that comes in a canister or foil pouch. Be truly good to your cat by watching her calorie intake.

"Unfortunately about 40 percent of cats are overweight because they've been overfed," says Dr.

Dodman. "Reduce their daily kibble ration a bit to make room for treats, and supply these treats at certain times of the day to make feeding not a boring event but one of great anticipation and excitement."

For his good cats, Cinder and Monkey, Dr. Dodman serves them a treat right before bedtime. They come bounding his way with tails straight up and feeling revved.

**5. Prevent solitary confinement.** Contrary to common belief, cats ARE social animals and crave interaction. You think you're being a good owner by overfilling their food bowls, adding a second bowl of water and a second litter box to meet their needs while you're gone for a three-day weekend.

You may be meeting your cat's physical needs—but not necessarily its social needs, says Dr. Hetts. Ask a friend or relative that your cat likes to come over for a few hours while you're gone to spend time with your cat.

**6. Select effective**

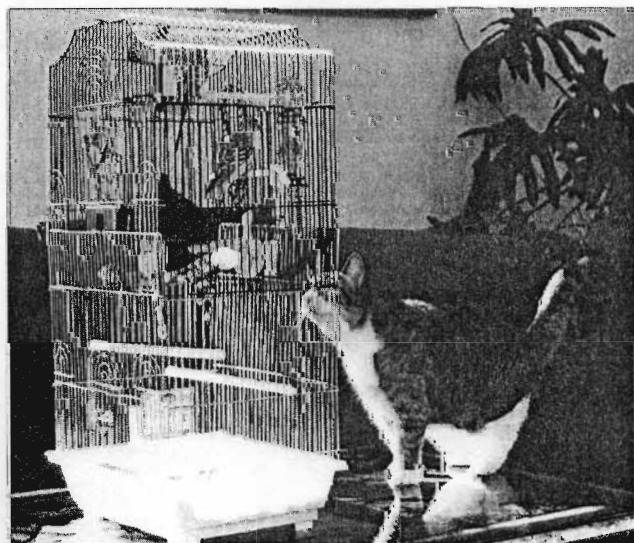
**scratching posts.** You know how frustrating it is to snag a fingernail with no nail clipper or file in sight. Now, imagine how your cat feels when it gets the itch to scratch.

"Some cats like to rake their claws in long strokes, others like to pick and others like to do both," says Dr. Hetts. "Selecting scratching posts made with rope materials wrapped around horizontally for a cat that likes to pick and loosely woven materials for cats that like to rake."

Other tips: locate the scratching post near your cat's favorite resting place or near a window. Cats scratch to mark territories, in play, to stretch after a nap and to remove outer sheaths from their claws.

**7. Regular exercise.** "Cats, just like dogs, need daily exercise," says Dr. Dodman. "Exercise provides mental stimulation and lets them practice their prey drive."

A few homemade toy suggestions: Play flashlight tag on a wall and floor (in an area free of furniture and other potential hazards) for your cat to stalk and pounce. Leave a paper shopping bag (with the handles snipped off) on the ground for your cat to explore. Tie an old shoelace around the plastic top of a milk carton and jiggle it and slowly drag it



**Dr. Dodman's cat, Monkey, has a stimulating, safe relationship with the family's birds. (This might not work in all homes, so be sure that feathered friends can't be harmed.)**



across the floor for your cat to chase and catch.

Create a homemade cat toy by putting a couple of plastic Ping Pong balls inside an empty tissue box and watch your cat try to fish out the balls with its paws.

**8. Safe sanctuaries.** Cats tend to not enjoy noisy, grabby, gabby humans, especially children. "When you plan on having company, set up your bedroom with food, water, and a litter box and close your cats inside," suggests Dr. McFarland. "Once the company has all settled—unless there are small children—open your door to allow your kitty the option of coming out or staying put. Most cats are not fond of strangers and they deserve a safe place and a graceful retreat to maintain their dignity."

**9. Environmental enrichment.** Cats are certainly safer when they live indoors, but you can take steps to prevent them from developing cabin fever. "Let your cat explore outside in a supervised way by building an enclosure or walking them on a harness and leash," says Dr. Hetts. "Let your cat roll on different surfaces and scratch different surfaces outdoors. You can also bring some of the great outdoors inside by bringing in a log for them to scratch. It gives them more sensory stimulation."

Also, encourage your cats to be nosey neighbors by providing them with a comfy window perch to roost and watch the activities happening outside, adds Dr. McFarland. If possible, position a bird feeder outside within view from a favorite windowsill for your prey-minded cat.

**10. Pet with a Purpose.** Cats aren't big fans of head patting. They prefer purposeful scratching and finger massaging. Learn the right way to pet your cat.

"Cats generally like to be scratched around their ears but do not like full body strokes, especially from strangers," says Dr. McFarland.

**L**ife in my triple tabby household became considerably more comfy and cozy for my cats after I wrote a 50-chapter book appropriately titled, *50 Simple Ways To Pamper Your Cat* (Storey Books, 2000).

Here are 10 bonus pampering perks from my book that will have your cat companions giving you paw's up approval:

- ◆ Grow some potted cat grass to fulfill your cat's plant-chewing instincts. Bonus: Chewing on grass will reduce hairballs. (See article on page 9.)
- ◆ Open the blinds to allow sunshine in and to give your cat a lookout point for outdoor action.
- ◆ You hate dirty dishes—well, so does your cat! Once a week, put your cat's food and water bowls in the dishwasher for a thorough cleaning.
- ◆ Warm a blanket or towel in the dryer and drape it on your cat during chilly nights to help her fall asleep.
- ◆ Fill an empty film canister with a teaspoon of dried rice and reseal the cap with a piece of tape to prevent it from being pulled off. Your cat will enjoy hours of fun batting around this noisy toy.
- ◆ Be the Martha Stewart of the cat world and match the color and design of the scratching posts to your living room furniture.
- ◆ The Sunday newspaper isn't a traditional toy, but cats love it anyway. Spread the paper on the floor and watch your cat make full-body dives on and under it. Spice up the fun by putting her favorite toy among the papers so she can pounce and hunt for it.
- ◆ If using dried catnip, store it in an airtight container in the refrigerator to extend its freshness.
- ◆ Set aside five minutes each morning to brush your cat. Suck up hair that falls on the floor with a vacuum cleaner.
- ◆ After a thorough brushing, treat your cat's skin and coat to a dab or two of fresh aloe to restore moisture.—by Arden Moore


"Many don't like being touched from the mid-back to the tail along the spine or have their bellies rubbed."

Adds Dr. Hetts, "Cats respond better when touched around their scent glands in the front of their ears and on both sides of their cheeks. Pay attention to their body posture. A cat that likes what you're doing will move in closer and may solicit more by rubbing up against your hand.

But a cat that doesn't like what you're doing may turn its head to look back at your hand, it may flip its tail, its eyes may dilate and its body will stiffen as it moves away. Heed those signs and let your cat go on its way."

Dr. Dodman says providing more perks to your cat chum will reap div-

idends for the both of you. You will have a healthier happier cat that requires less veterinary care and one that thrives on your company.

"Cats and people should not live parallel lives," he says. "Paying attention to your good cat can lead to a total new appreciation for each other. My cats are like family members and they love to hang on my shoulder like rag dolls. They are super patient and very affectionate. It's as if they are telling us that we are such fine owners and we tell them that they are wonderful cats." 

Arden Moore is the "Healthy Pets" columnist for *Prevention* magazine and the author of *The Kitten Owner's Manual* (Storey Books, 2001). She shares her home with Callie, Murphy and Little Guy.

Reprint: Catnip Newsletter

## CATS LIKE - LARGE, CLEAN LITTER BOXES & soft barely sented/unsented litter

Start out without a cover on the box, possibly even a disposable one while kitty is getting comfortable in your home. If your home is two story have boxes upstairs & down. If multiple cats have extra boxes at least in the beginning until you are SURE cats are comfortable sharing boxes.

Cat Litter Boxes come in all sizes, shapes & prices

Choosing a litterbox that your cat likes is crucial to a happy cat & household

*NOT your only cat box or your first ⇒*



*Automatic boxes are great but start out with them off & NOT for kittens!!*

*Plastic Storage Containers work, sometimes a hole is cut*



*Disposables*

As my vet says, you clean your bathroom at least once a week, do the same for your kitty. This means dump all litter, wash box and replace with clean litter, forget liners they aren't needed.

## BOXES CAN BE HIDDEN WITH CLEVER FURNITURE or COVERS

*(These came from websites listed below, many others available.)*



LC900 Wainscoting



[www.modernistcat.com](http://www.modernistcat.com)

[www.allpetfurniture.com](http://www.allpetfurniture.com)  
[www.lovemypetsupply.com](http://www.lovemypetsupply.com)  
[www.MyCatsHeaven.com](http://www.MyCatsHeaven.com)  
[www.bigfatkittycat.com](http://www.bigfatkittycat.com)  
[www.drsfosters&Smith.com](http://www.drsfosters&Smith.com)  
[www.catsplay.com](http://www.catsplay.com)  
[www.litterWorks.com](http://www.litterWorks.com)  
[www.improvementscatalog.com](http://www.improvementscatalog.com)  
[www.designercatbox.com](http://www.designercatbox.com)  
[www.petco.com](http://www.petco.com) & many, others...

## SOLVING LITTER BOX PROBLEMS, PART 1

One of the more frequent problems that cat owners face at one time or another is that of a cat refusing to use the litter box, even after using it for years in the past. This behavior may nearly always be corrected with proper attention to the cat's health and environment.

The first thing to do is to rule out a physical problem by taking your cat to a veterinarian for a physical examination. Common medical causes for inappropriate elimination is a urinary tract infection or crystals in the urine, either of which can make urination very painful. Cats often associate this pain with the litter box and begin to avoid it. Left untreated, a urinary tract infection or blockage from crystals can cause permanent damage or be fatal, so do NOT delay in seeking medical attention.

Once you've ruled out medical issues, you will need to turn your attention to the cat's environment. Cats may stop using the litter box because of a radical change in their surroundings, such as the introduction of a new pet, moving homes, rearranging furniture, new person in household, remodeling, or even a new baby. In the best case scenario, you will plan ahead and ease the transition. For instance, if you move, introduce your cat to the new home the same way you would bring an entirely new animal in—start in a confined, isolated space and gradually let the cat explore his or her new surroundings. If you remodel your house, keep the cat isolated from the area and only when it is complete should you slowly re-introduce him to the area. For more details see chapter on *Introducing New Kitty to Your Home*.

Cats may also stop using the litter box because they are dissatisfied with the type of box or type of litter you use. A change in the box or litter can cause them to stop using it; try and stay consistent for the life of the cat. If you do want to change do it gradually by adding just a little of the new litter into the box and over time add more and more until you have made the transition. If this doesn't work, go back to the first litter.

Some cats even like to have two boxes—one for each function. I have been told this especially true of Persian cats. Some cats like covered boxes, others like open ones. Some don't want to share a box,

others don't mind at all. Some cats don't like liners or scented litter. In short, you will need to be prepared to experiment and slowly rule things out.

Studies done by veterinary schools have shown that most cats prefer fine, smooth unscented or barely scented litter in a clean box. If you are bringing a new cat into the home we recommend using a fine unscented litter in a large box without a liner. Liners can tear with the cats claws.

Also our vets recommend cleaning the box every week with a mild detergent, not strong bleach, and filling with clean litter. Once vet once said to me, you clean your bathroom every week don't you, well you cats wants the same level or cleanliness. A dirty litter box is another reason cats mess outside the box.

Anytime your cat messes outside the box, clean the soiled area promptly and thoroughly (as otherwise the cat may continue using the area as a de facto bathroom) and use positive reinforcement to re-introduce your cat to the litter box. Find urine stains with a fluorescent black light, available at hardware and pet supply stores. The stains will glow under the black light. Once you locate a stain, clean it with an enzymatic cleaner made especially for pet odors, available at pet supply stores. Don't use ammonia or other strong-smelling household cleaners. These will encourage your cat to re-mark in that area.

You may also want to isolate the cat to retrain—more on that on the last page of Litter Box Issues, Part 2.

***Do not yell at or strike your cat if he or she does not use the litter box.*** Litter box problems are almost always temporary and reversible, but a cat can develop litter box aversion if it associates elimination with punishment. While you aren't expected to celebrate if your cats pees on your sofa, it will only make matters worse if you punish the cat.

Animals don't understand punishment after the fact, even if it's only seconds later. If you are lucky enough to catch her in the cat, interrupt by making a startling noise but be careful not to scare her. Immediately take her to where the litter box is located and set her on the floor in front of it. If she wanders over to the litter box, wait and praise her after she eliminates in the box. If she takes off in another direction, she may want privacy, so watch from afar until she goes back

to the litter box and eliminates, then praise her when she does. If she doesn't go to it, consider isolating her in the bathroom with the litter box for a time.

### Steps to Avoid Litter Box Aversion

Your cat may have decided that the litter box is an unpleasant place to eliminate if the box is not clean enough for her, if she has been started by a noise while using the box, if she has been “ambushed” while in the box either by another cat, a child, a dog, or by you, or if she associates elimination with unpleasantness.

- Keep the litter box extremely clean. Scoop at least once a day, twice is better. Change the litter completely every week and wash the box with a mild detergent. Cats have an extremely sensitive sense of smell so if you can smell the box, from the cat's perspective it must really reek.
- You should have at least one litter box for every two cats. If your home is two story we recommend one upstairs and one downstairs.
- Add a new box in a different location than the old one and use a different type of litter in the new box. Because your cat has decided that her old litter box is unpleasant, you'll want to make the new one different enough that she doesn't simply apply the old, negative associations to the new box.
- Sometimes it's the location of the box that is a problem. Make sure the litter box isn't near an appliance that makes noise or other wise is in a noisy area. Some cats will not use a box in the laundry room if the washer or dryer are running, they want a more quiet location.
- If ambushing is a problem, try to create more than one exit from the litter box inclosure or area, so that if the “ambusher” is waiting by one exit your cat always has an escape route.

### Surface Preferences

All animals develop preferences for a particular surface on which they like to eliminate. These preferences may be established early in life, but they may also change for reasons that we don't always understand. Your cat may have a surface preference if she consistently eliminates on a particular texture, such as a soft-textured surface (carpet, bedding or clothing) or a slick-textured surface (such as tile, bathtubs or sinks).

- If your cat is eliminating on soft surfaces, try using a high quality, scoopable litter that is soft and fine, preferably unscented. Petco's Pet Gold is like this. Put a soft rug under the litter box.
- If your cat is eliminating on slick, smooth surfaces, try putting just a very thin layer of litter at one end of the box, leaving the other end bare and put the box on a hard floor. You might also use a large plastic storage container with a smooth bottom for the litter box.
- If your cat has a history of being outdoors, add some soil to the litter box.

You can also try making the area where she has been inappropriately eliminating aversive to her by covering it with an upside-down carpet runner or mat or aluminum foil or by placing citrus-scented cotton balls over the area.

There is also a litter on the market called Dr. Elsey's Cat Attract that is guaranteed or your money back to attract cats to the box. Most cats love it.

If your cat is having litter box problems, don't worry—you are not alone. The internet is full of good information and suggests on what to do.

One of my favorite is ***The Litter Box From Your Cat's Point of View*** by Lisa A. Pierson, DVM at this link: <http://www.catinfo.org/?link=litterbox> This is extremely thorough, I wish I had room to reprint the entire web article in this adoption package.



### ***Litterbox, Litterbox, Where Are You Litterbox?***

There are a few other things to keep in mind about the litterbox. Is it located in the right area? Cats do not like to have their litterbox too close to their food and bedding. They do like to have a consistent and private place to do their business. So don't put the box in the busiest room of your house.

Occasionally there may be something about the box or location of the box that inhibits the cat from using it. I remember one woman who accidentally dropped a roll of toilet paper on the cat's head while he was in the box. Another person turned on the shower before closing the curtain and the cat got sprayed with water while in the litterbox. Both of these cats were afraid to even go into the bathroom, much less use the litterbox there after these experiences. We had to temporarily put the boxes just outside the bathroom door.

It may seem like common sense, but is the box easy for the cat to get to? I'm surprised at how many owners keep the box in a closet and then forget to leave the closet door open!

Another owner kept moving the box every day trying to find a place where his dog could not get into it. The dog probably enjoyed the challenge of the search but I'm sure the cat didn't.

And what about the litter itself? Every cat has his own likes and dislikes, but most cats like clean, absorbant litter that feels and smells natural to them. Sometimes they are repelled by fancy litters with additives and perfumes that are more for our benefit than for the cat's.

### ***I've Cleaned Up the Act, But ...***

OK, so you have a clean litterbox with the right litter and it's located in a quiet, private, easy-to-get-to place. Now what? Many cats won't magically start using their box again just because you've started keeping it clean.

First of all, the cat won't know that the box is really clean. After all, it's been dirty for the last six months so why should things be any different now? He will just assume it's still dirty and go straight to where he knows it will be clean. Whenever the cat pees in the closet or poops under the piano, you don't let it sit there for a week. You clean it up immediately! The cat keeps going back there because he knows it's always clean.

I drive from San Francisco to Los Angeles a lot and there are a few gas stations along the way that I simply don't stop at anymore because I've learned from experience that their facilities are never clean. I'm not going to waste my time stopping to check them out, even if they posted a sign that read, "Attention! Our bathrooms have been cleaned!" I would just laugh and drive right on by. So your cat too probably looks at the litterbox, laughs and cruises right on by.

Some owners go berserk when they find puddles or piles somewhere in the house. Often times they scream, grab the cat and throw her in the litterbox - or they grab the cat's paws and force her to dig in the litter. Cats hate to be forced into doing anything. These cats avoid the box because they have learned that it's a torture chamber. They associate the box with unpleasant experiences.

In order to turn this all around, you must convince the cat that the litterbox is both a clean and pleasant place to be. Whenever your cat is hungry or in a playful mood, get out a special treat or her favorite toy and lure her near her box.

If those gas stations had a sign that read, "Ten dollars to everyone who checks out our facilities," you bet I wouldn't just drive by and laugh. These guys are actively trying to convince me that they've changed their ways and their human litterboxes are clean and pleasant. You must apply the same bribery techniques and principles to your cat.

Most hungry cats will happily follow a chunk of turkey dangling in front of their nose. Entice kitty to follow the food or a toy to his box, then enthusiastically praise and reward kitty when you get to the box. Within a short time, kitty will get the hang of the game and you can begin calling him to come towards you and the box from different locations in your home. Work especially hard to call kitty away from areas he has soiled in the past. When he arrives at the box, profusely praise and reward him. Now kitty will see that not only is the box clean, but it's also a rewarding and pleasant place to be. The next step is to praise and reward him for times he actually uses his box.

### ***What Goes In, Must Come Out***

We expect cats to train themselves because cats are instinctively clean. Litterbox training will progress much more quickly if you can reward and praise the cat when he is using his box. The timing of the reward is extremely important. In order to effectively reward the cat for using the box, you must *be there* when

he uses the box.

If you must be there to reward him, then obviously you need to know when he has to go, or you'll be hanging around the litterbox forever. This brings up the importance of schedules. A cat's physical system is like clock work. If the input is at the same time every day, the output will take on a corresponding schedule. Once you know the approximate time your cat will need to eliminate, you can arrange to be present to reward and praise him when he eliminates in the box.

Now you only have to hang around the box for about 15 minutes instead of all day long. If you keep an eye on your cat during this time, you can also prevent him from going near those places that he used to soil.

### ***If It's Still Not Working***

For severe litterbox problems, it may be necessary to confine your cat with a litterbox, her toys, scratching post and bed to one room for a few days. By confining your cat, she can more quickly learn to use her box. First, if you and your cat are both in the same room, then it will be easier for you to keep an eye on her, so it will be easier for you to praise and reward her at the exact right moment.

Second, if you're not there, the chances are high that she will use the box on her own. If given the choice of using litter or a linoleum or tile floor, your cat will choose the litter which absorbs the urine and gives her the opportunity and ability to cover her feces.

Cats are creatures of habit. They usually return to the same places to do their business.

So additionally, confinement is used to help break the cat's habit of eliminating in inappropriate areas. If she doesn't have access to these areas, then she doesn't have the opportunity to keep reinforcing her old habit.

If you are turned off to the idea of confinement, then you probably don't really understand it. Maybe you've tried it in the past, went about it the wrong way and had a bad experience, or the cat had a bad experience. If your attitude is that confinement is a prison sentence, then it is not going to work. Confinement should be a positive and rewarding training experience. Review the section that explains the use and purposes of temporary confinement.

### Summary

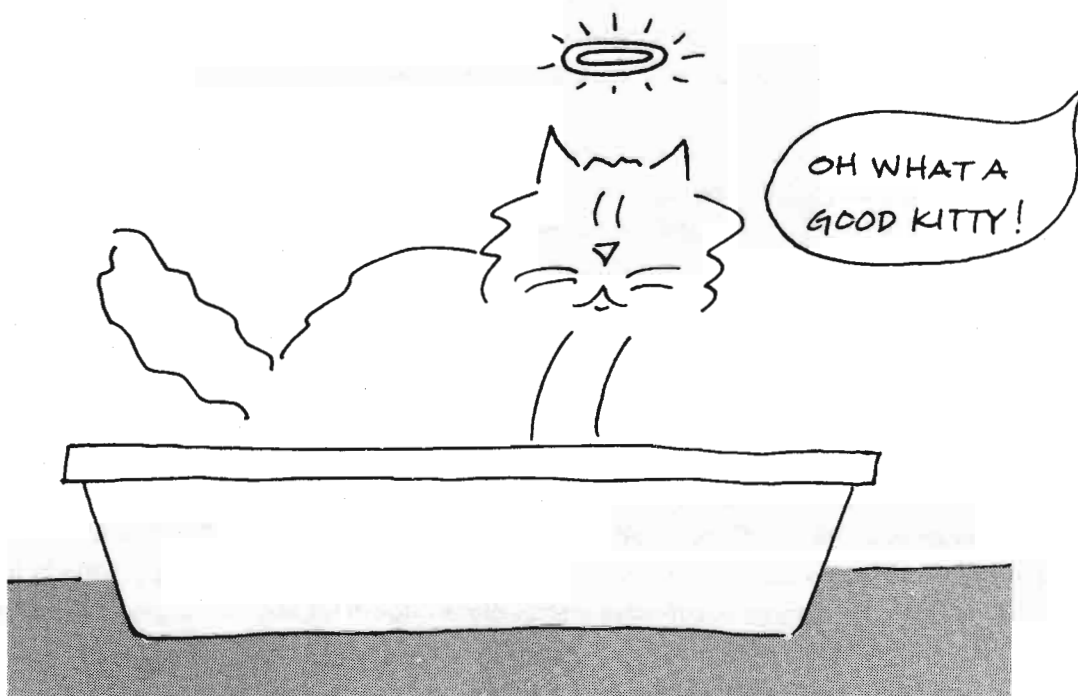
1. The litterbox must always be clean. Sometimes all it can take is neglecting the box just once and the cat will feel forced to go

somewhere else. Now you have to start all over again retraining your cat to use his box. So don't forget to clean the box without fail.

2. Make sure you have the right number of litterboxes in appropriate locations with the right litter.

3. Praise and reward your cat whenever you see her use her box. During initial training, it is important to be present as much as possible to reward your cat when she uses the box. Once your cat is trained, it is still equally as important to maintain the training by regularly praising your cat anytime you see her use the box. If you forget to reward your cat, she may forget to use her box. Never take good behavior for granted or you may find yourself having to retrain your cat to use her box.

4. Training may require the use of confinement. This is only a temporary measure to speed up the training process and to help break bad habits.



One way to prevent bad habits from forming and also a method of breaking already established habits is through the use of confinement. Confinement is no different than putting a baby in a play pen. When mom is cooking dinner in the kitchen and can't watch baby, she puts him in a playpen so he stays out of trouble and doesn't get hurt. She doesn't expect the baby to know that the stove is hot or that he could fall down the stairs. She doesn't expect the baby to stay out of trouble without supervision. Why do we expect more from our cats than we do from our own children? We want them to read our minds and automatically know what they should and shouldn't do.

The playpen is not a jail. When children get used to it, they learn to entertain themselves and enjoy their playpen. That's why they're called playpens. When you confine your cat, you should have the same attitude. Make it a special place for your cat. You should consider it the cat's playroom.

Make the room a pleasant and fun place to be. Introduce it slowly and gradually. Spend time there with your cat until he feels confident in his own special haven. Don't just toss kitty in and walk away. Give your cat things to do in there. Cats really don't mind being confined. After all, how many times have you looked for your kitty only to find her curled up in a dresser drawer that you left open? Cats love to hide in boxes, paper bags and hang out on the top shelf of the linen closet. Now these spaces are really confined. You are going to give your cat much more space than that.

The cat is not going to be confined forever, but just until she can be trusted to have full freedom of the house. Part of confinement is prevention. You may as well prevent having

your entire house become a huge litterbox while the cat is being litterbox-trained. Until our human babies are potty trained, we put diapers on them to prevent accidents. With children, we are very prevention oriented, so why shouldn't we be that way with our cats?

Confinement is prevention, but equally as important, confinement also helps the cat develop good habits. If the only available scratching item in the playroom is a scratching post, then kitty will develop a habit of scratching it simply because there is nothing else there to scratch on. The more the cat scratches the post, the stronger that habit becomes. The longer the cat is prevented from scratching a couch, the more likely that habit will be broken.

There are three purposes for confinement. First, it protects your property. Your cat cannot scratch your couch because the couch is not in the cat's playroom. Second, it protects your cat. Kitty doesn't know that plants and chemicals can be poisonous and that electric cords can kill. Third, it allows the development of good habits while at the same time breaks and prevents bad habits from forming.

In order to accomplish these three things, the cat's playroom should not have anything in it that you don't want destroyed; it should not have anything in it that can harm the cat; it should not have anything in it that you don't want the cat to develop a habit of eating, scratching, soiling, playing with, sleeping on or whatever. It should have lots of toys, two or more scratching/climbing posts, bedding, a litterbox, food and water bowls. This is the cat's playroom, not a jail. It is only temporary until kitty can be trusted to have full run of your home.



## MOVING WITH YOUR CAT

It doesn't matter if you are moving across town or across the country – you need to do a little planning to make it easy for you *and* your kitties.

### Before the move:

- Get out the carriers cats will travel in.
- One cat per carrier, unless small kittens, this applies even if they are best friends.
- NO TEMPORARY CARDBOARD carriers.
- Carrier must be roomy enough for cat to lie down comfortably (unless traveling by plane then “fit under seat” rule applies).
- If you need to get another carrier, try the local thrift stores, often only cost for \$5–10.00.
- Leave carriers open on the floor, for a week or more, with door secured so it can't close.
- Put small bed/pad inside, if they like treats add them too. This is to get them comfortable with carriers.
- Do not fill carrier with big cat bed, better to have space for cat to move around.
- Get a foam pad for carrier that absorbs pee or small training pads for bottom of carriers.
- Buy screw-on water bowl, that won't take up much room in carrier, best are found in bird section of pet stores.

### Day movers (or friends helping you pack) come:

- Lock cats in one room with sign on door, “DO NOT OPEN, Scared Cats Inside”. More than one cat has gotten out and lost when strangers are inside moving boxes and furniture.

### Moving day:

- **Do not sedate your cat even if flying or traveling by car.**
- Feed cats normally in the morning, early enough so hopefully they will use the litterbox.
- Put cats in one room with their carriers so they aren't hiding when you want to leave.
- Put cats INTO carriers and then into car just before you are ready to drive off.

*Note: Do not fill water bowl until cats in car then using bottle pour in water through grate until it's 1/2 full.*



### Traveling in car:

- Don't be surprised if your cat doesn't eat or drink water while car is moving or even when you stop for short breaks, I have transported cats for 12 hours and most adult cats don't eat or want to use litter box while moving. If transporting kittens put in small pan with litter.
- If outside temperatures of over 70 degrees -- when you stop for gas pull into bay with shade, open ALL of the windows so breeze gets in. Use drive through eateries, don't leave cats unattended.
- If you stop for the night – bring cats inside in carriers, place them in the bathroom with door closed with food, water and small litterbox. I like to use a grain-based litter like Swheat or World's Best Cat Litter that leaves no clay. Even their most outgoing cat might hide under the bed in a strange place.

### Traveling by air:

- Before traveling the cat needs a Health Certificate from your vet. Do not wait until the day before to get it.
- Get a halter for your cat since you have to take the cat out at security points & a good quality airline approved carrier. Arrive early at airport.

### At the new home:

- Even if no one is in the house put cats in one room and get them used to the new home like you did when you first brought them to your home. Cats have marked a new home because they are scared.
- Let them settle in that room for a week or two and CERTAINLY the day movers come with your things keep them securely confined to one room.

## CARE FOR YOUR PETS FOR LIFE, THEIR LIFE

### *Take the Time to Make Arrangements for Your Pets*

Every day we get phone calls or see wonderful animals dropped off at “Animal Shelters” when



a human has passed away or gone into a nursing home and left their beloved pets behind. No formal pet guardian was established, leaving the pets

homeless.

Many people think their relatives will do “right thing” and take good care of their companion animals. Sadly this is often not the case. Often the companion animal is confused at losing its loved one and home. The friend or relative doesn’t know how to properly introduce the new animal to their household so they think it won’t work out and decide to take it to a shelter.

Many people think they are doing the right thing for their friend or relative’s pet not realizing, or not wanting to know, the animal will most likely be euthanized. Most of these pets are seniors and confused by the change, they are considered unadoptable and euthanized as soon as allowed by law, which is usually a few days.

Please make sure your pet is cared for in the event of your demise. Take the time to complete the attached Pet Guardian Form for ALL of your pets. Talk to the person’s mentioned on the form, consider leaving funds or life insurance to cover your pet’s lifetime care. This is a small kindness you can do that will guarantee your companion animals a happy long life.

California allows for animal trusts, consider such an option. Please review any forms you complete with your Will and Trust Attorney.

Additionally take the time to write out information about each pet. Simple information you carry in your head should be written down so the person or organization caring for your pet will make it as comfortable as possible. The back of the Pet Guardian Form has a section to record this information.

Pet’s name, age, health issues, spay/neutered, name and phone number of vet, diet and personality are all important. If the pet was adopted from a rescue organization include their information and ask them to contact the group for assistance.

Our pets give us so much love, we can do the same for them after we are gone. For the love of your pets, care for them for life, *their life*.



*We don't expect you to be buried with your pet as this gentleman was but please be sure they are taken care of.*

## PET GUARDIAN

In the event of my severe illness or death, please implement the following instructions.

### GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

I have made arrangements with the individual(s) listed with each pet to care for him/her. Please contact them at once, as my pet(s) will need to be cared for immediately.

If they are unable or unwilling to accept my animals, my Executor shall select an appropriate person to accept the animals and treat them as their companion animals. If no such person(s) can be found then I direct my Executor to contact a 501c3 non-profit animal rescue organization with a stellar reputation to re-home my animals. I give my animals to such person(s) or organization.

Under NO circumstances shall my pet(s) be turned into a kill shelter. Under NO circumstances shall my pet(s) be euthanized unless it is found to be suffering from an incurable illness and this is verified by an exam and in writing by my veterinarian, or is he/she is unavailable by two other licensed veterinarians.

I direct my Executor to give \$ \_\_\_\_\_ from my estate to each person who accepts my animals, and I request (but do not direct) that these funds be used for the care of my animals. If it is an organization that takes my animals I direct my Executor to give \$ \_\_\_\_\_ from my estate for each animal. These funds may come from any designated insurance policy and from the rest of my estate.

I have an insurance policy, which I designate to be used for the care of my pets: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Insurance Company: \_\_\_\_\_ Tel # \_\_\_\_\_ Policy # \_\_\_\_\_

Policy is located ☐ Home in \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ Safety Deposit Box ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

The Executor of my will:

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

### VETERINARY INFORMATION

Veterinarian Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Vet's Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Vet Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Veterinarian Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Vet's Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Vet Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Pets visit the veterinarian? ☐ Annually ☐ As Needed ☐ Both

**PETS RECORD IN MY HOME**, are located: \_\_\_\_\_

My choice of non-profit animal rescue group(s): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

WITNESSES:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Pet is a Cat/Dog/Other:** Name \_\_\_\_\_ Birth date \_\_\_\_\_ Sex? \_\_\_\_ Spay/neuter? \_\_\_\_\_  
Description (size, color, breed) \_\_\_\_\_  
Personality, likes and dislikes \_\_\_\_\_

Health Issues \_\_\_\_\_ Medicine? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Current on shots? \_\_\_\_\_ If cat, declawed? \_\_\_\_\_

What does it eat? (Brand, flavors, wet, dry) \_\_\_\_\_

Feeding Frequency: ☐ Morning ☐ Night ☐ Both ☐ Leave dry food out all day ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Is this pet use to being indoors or outdoors or both? ☐ Indoors ☐ Outdoors ☐ Both

If allowed outside ☐ Anytime ☐ Daytime only ☐ Under supervision ☐ On balcony/patio only ☐ On leash ☐ Fenced yard

Where does it sleep at night? ☐ Anywhere in house ☐ Garage ☐ My Bedroom ☐ Outside ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

The ideal home for this pet is: \_\_\_\_\_

**Name/Org has agreed to care for this pet:** Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Home Tel # \_\_\_\_\_ Work # \_\_\_\_\_ Cell # \_\_\_\_\_

Adopted from Rescue Group: \_\_\_\_\_ Tel # \_\_\_\_\_ contact them for assistance.

**Under NO circumstances shall this pet be turned into a kill shelter or euthanized (except as noted in General Instructions).**

**Pet is a Cat/Dog/Other:** Name \_\_\_\_\_ Birth date \_\_\_\_\_ Sex? \_\_\_\_ Spay/neuter? \_\_\_\_\_

Description (size, color, breed) \_\_\_\_\_

Personality, likes and dislikes \_\_\_\_\_

Health Issues \_\_\_\_\_ Medicine? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Current on shots? \_\_\_\_\_ If cat, declawed? \_\_\_\_\_

What does it eat? (Brand, flavors, wet, dry) \_\_\_\_\_

Feeding Frequency: ☐ Morning ☐ Night ☐ Both ☐ Leave dry food out all day ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Is this pet use to being indoors or outdoors or both? ☐ Indoors ☐ Outdoors ☐ Both

If allowed outside ☐ Anytime ☐ Daytime only ☐ Under supervision ☐ On balcony/patio only ☐ On leash ☐ Fenced yard

Where does it sleep at night? ☐ Anywhere in house ☐ Garage ☐ My Bedroom ☐ Outside ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

The ideal home for this pet is: \_\_\_\_\_

**Name/Org has agreed to care for this pet:** Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Home Tel # \_\_\_\_\_ Work # \_\_\_\_\_ Cell # \_\_\_\_\_

Adopted from Rescue Group: \_\_\_\_\_ Tel # \_\_\_\_\_ contact them for assistance.

**Under NO circumstances shall this pet be turned into a kill shelter or euthanized (except as noted in General Instructions).**

(Before completing, make copies of this page for additional pets)

Page \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ Pet Information Pages

This document is provided as a courtesy from Southern Counties Rescue, it and all other documents affecting your estate should be discussed with your attorney.



## WHAT YOUR CAT MISSES BY NOT GOING OUTDOORS

Cats are curious animals, and we all know the saying, “Curiosity Killed the Cat.”

Many people think their cat will not be content if it can’t go outside – that just isn’t so. Cats stare out of doors and windows because they are curious and like to observe.

These are the things your cat will miss by not going outside –

- Won’t be killed by a coyote in the daytime while napping on your patio.
- Won’t be hit by a car when kitty decides to cross the street.
- Won’t be killed by a hawk or owl that can pick up an adult cat.
- Won’t be poisoned accidentally or intentionally by everyday chemicals used in gardens, cleaning and cars.
- Won’t be dumped in the country or at an animal shelter by a neighbor who doesn’t appreciate your cat using his garden as a bathroom.
- Won’t roam too far and become lost.
- Won’t be infested with fleas and ticks or worms.
- Won’t catch a deadly disease like Feline Leukemia.
- Won’t have huge vet bills due to attacks or illnesses caught from other animals.
- Won’t spray because he/she thinks he has to protect his territory inside and out.
- Won’t be stolen.
- Won’t be killed or tortured by a cruel person who hates cats.

We all want our cats to have a fulfilling life full of adventures, good food, sunny spots to nap in and a lot of love. We also want them to live a long, healthy life. Cats that stay strictly indoors can have it all—favorite sunny spots to nap safely, all kinds of adventures with furry catnip mice and other creative toys and they will live to enjoy old age. In Southern California due to car traffic and wild animals indoor/outdoor cats are killed or die from disease often before their third birthday while indoor cats live 12-20 years and longer. I think your cat would rather live a long life than die young.

If you really think your cat will not be content unless it can go outdoors, then create a safe outdoor space using cat proof fencing or coyote prevention roll bars. You can find companies on the internet that provide the tools you need to make a fenced in yard or patio cat safe.

Remember you wouldn’t let your three year old child run outside into danger even though he might want to, so don’t let your cat.

# Poisonous Plants

Aloe Vera  
Amaryllis  
Apple (seeds)  
Apple Leaf Croton  
Apricot (pit)  
Asparagus Fern  
Autumn Crocus  
Azalea

Baby's Breath  
Bird of Paradise  
Branching Ivy  
Buckeye  
Buddhist Pine

Caladium  
Calla Lily  
Castor Bean  
Ceriman  
Charming Dieffenbachia  
Cherry (seeds and wilting leaves)  
Chinese Evergreen  
Cineraria  
Clematis  
Cordatum  
Corn Plant  
Cornstalk Plant  
Croton  
Cuban Laurel  
Cutleaf Philodendron  
Cycads  
Cyclamen

Daffodil  
Devil's Ivy  
Dieffenbachia  
Dracaena Palm  
Dragon Tree  
Dumb Cane

Easter Lily  
Elaine  
Elephant Ears  
Emerald Feather  
English Ivy  
Eucalyptus

Fiddle-leaf Fig  
Florida Beauty  
Foxglove  
Fruit Salad Plant

Geranium  
German Ivy  
Giant Dumb Cane  
Glacier Ivy  
Gold Dust Dracaena  
Golden Pothos

Hahn's Self-Branching Ivy  
Heartland Philodendron  
Hurricane Plant

Indian Rubber Plant

Janet Craig Dracaena  
Japanese Show Lily  
Jerusalem Cherry

Kalanchoe

Lacy Tree Philodendron  
Lily of the Valley

Madagascar Dragon Tree  
Marble Queen  
Marijuana  
Mexican Breadfruit  
Miniature Croton  
Mistletoe  
Morning Glory  
Mother-in-Law's Tongue

Narcissus  
Needlepoint Ivy  
Nephytis  
Nightshade

Oleander  
Onion  
Oriental Lily

Peace Lily  
Peach (wilting leaves and pits)  
Pencil Cactus  
Plumosa Fern  
Poinsettia (low toxicity)  
Poison Ivy  
Poison Oak  
Pothos  
Precatory Bean  
Primrose

Red Emerald  
Red Princess  
Red-Margined Dracaena  
Rhododendron  
Ribbon Plant

Saddle Leaf Philodendron  
Sago Palm  
Satin Pothos  
Schefflera  
Silver Pothos  
Spotted Dumb Cane  
String of Pearls  
Striped Dracaena  
Sweetheart Ivy  
Swiss Cheese Plant

Taro Vine  
Tiger Lily  
Tomato Plant (green fruit, stem and leaves)  
Tree Philodendron  
Tropic Snow Dieffenbachia

Weeping Fig

Yew

*Note that all sorts of lilies are extremely toxic to cats.*

By Dusty Rainbolt

# The Rising Threat of Coyotes

Reports of attacks on cats are increasing in nearly every state.

**N**o matter where you reside, cats who are allowed to roam outside unsupervised are threatened by cars, disease, roaming dogs, human cruelty and coyotes. Even in densely populated areas, coyotes present a real danger to cats.

Coyotes live in every state but Hawaii and thrive in cities and suburbs, according to wildlife experts. Carol Cartaino, author of *The Myths and Truths About Coyotes: What You Need to Know About America's Most Misunderstood Predator* (Menasha Ridge Press, 2010), reports that they have even been spotted in New York City's Central Park.

Becoming less fearful of people, meal-seeking coyotes are roaming during daylight hours.

In early 2010, while out jogging, Texas Gov. Rick Perry shot a coyote that was stalking and threatening Perry and his Labrador retriever puppy. A few months ago, I was shocked to watch a well-fed coyote trot casually past me at my suburban north Texas home during the mid-morning.

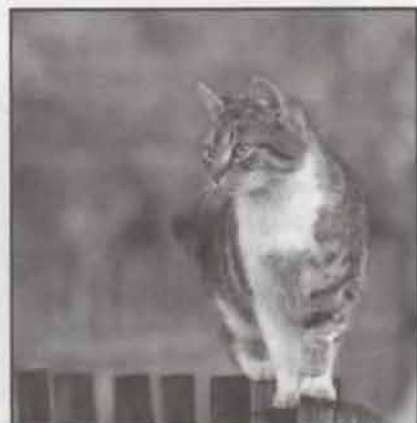
Alice Moon-Fanelli, PhD, a certified-applied animal behaviorist with Animal Behavior Consultations at Brooklyn Veterinary Hospital in Brooklyn, CT, agrees with Cartaino that the best way to keep cats safe from coyotes is to keep them indoors.

Dr. Moon-Fanelli, who has feral barn cats at her rural Connecticut home, worries about her outdoor companions. Although so far they've remained safe from coyotes, many of her neighbors haven't been as lucky.

"One day you have a cat; the next day you don't," she says.

## Coyotes and cats hunt at dusk and dawn

Following coyote attacks, says Dr. Moon-Fanelli, cat owners may never know what happened to their cat because they may never find a body. Both cats and coy-



A backyard fence offers no protection for cats from coyotes or other predators who can easily leap up and over.

otes hunt at dusk and dawn, and most cats aren't coyote savvy.

"Outdoor cats accustomed to dogs will have a higher threshold for the presence of a coyote," explains Dr. Moon-Fanelli. "They're more likely to fall prey to coyotes. If you love your cat and you want your cat to live a long, healthy and safe life, bring him inside."

If your cat is used to spending time outside, don't just lock him in the house permanently and expect him to make the transition easily.

"Some cats acclimate nicely to living indoors," she says. "To help your cat make the transition, provide extra attention, exercise and mental and physical stimulation. Make sure your indoor environment is stimulating, and your cat will have less desire to go outside."



Coyotes have become less fearful of people and now live in every state but Hawaii.



## Coyote expert offers advice

In a recent interview, Carol Cartaino, author of *The Myths and Truths About Coyotes: What You Need to Know About America's Most Misunderstood Predator*, talked with *Catnip* about the coyote threat to domestic cats.

**Q: As humans encroach into coyote territory, you'd think coyotes would be struggling for food. Why is that not true anymore?**

**Cartaino:** Coyotes have successfully adapted to suburban living because they have so many food sources in the suburbs. They can feed from food scraps in trash cans or eat bowls of food left out on porches and other places for pets.

**Q: Cats have great defenses in claws and teeth, and they can climb trees. If they hang out near trees, shouldn't they be safe?**

**Cartaino:** Some outside cats and feral cats remain alert and agile. But many pet cats, living the good life with humans, have grown fat, out of shape and under-vigilant. Even a strong, fit and vigilant cat has little chance against a fast, agile coyote that's three or four times its size.

Researchers from the Universities of Arizona and Montana took a closer look at the cat-coyote question in 2005 and 2006. They trapped and fitted radio collars on eight Tucson-area coyotes and then observed them. Of 36 coyote-cat encounters, 19 proved fatal to the cat. During the 45 times they actually observed a coyote eating, more than 40 percent of the time it was eating cat.

Reports of coyote attacks on cats have been increasing in almost every state. Recent studies done in Claremont, California, and Seattle and Vancouver, Washington, indicate that urban coyotes rely on pets as a major

food source, especially in winter and spring. From 1985 to 1995, for example, the number of coyote attacks on pets in Texas rose fourfold.

**Q: What can cat owners do to protect their pets?**

**Cartaino:** The biggest single thing you can do is keep your cats inside. If you have outdoor cats, don't let them out from sunset to sunrise. Coyotes hunt at dawn and dusk. That's when cats hunt as well. Small dogs aren't safe, either.

**Q: Shouldn't a fenced yard protect my dog and cat?**

**Cartaino:** A fenced yard is no deterrent. There have been many reports of coyotes jumping a backyard fence, grabbing a small pet, and then running off with it. Actually, the fence makes it easier to corner the pet.

**Q: How can I keep from attracting coyotes to my property?**

**Cartaino:** Never put out any food or water sources. Bird feeders attract rodents, which attract coyotes. Feeding any wild animals outside is asking for trouble. Feeding coyotes attracts them, but doesn't stop them from attacking pets.

The University of California states in its coyote management guidelines, "Anyone who intentionally feeds coyotes is putting the entire neighborhood's pets and children at risk of coyote attack and serious injury."

If you see a coyote, never act indifferently or friendly toward it. Yell or throw something. For them to coexist harmlessly in the human community, they must be afraid of people.

—By Dusty Rainbolt

Try to reproduce many of the same opportunities your active cat would have outside.

"Inside cats need opportunities to climb, run, jump and play," Dr. Moon-Fanelli says.

If you fail to satisfy these needs, you risk that your cat will seek inappropriate outlets such as scratching furniture, climbing drapes and urine marking.

## Expert offers safe outdoor options

It's possible to provide your cat with opportunities for outdoor activity, and still keep her safe. Dr. Moon-Fanelli suggests that that you consider building a cat porch or enclosing your current


porch. Place a log for scratching and maybe add a cat tree for climbing. Provide your cat with live cat grass and catnip. Bring in some leaves or maybe even a box of garden dirt.

Although most pet owners walk their dogs frequently, many fail to consider this option for cats. "For cats who accept walking on a harness, it's a safe compromise," Dr. Moon-Fanelli says. "Not all cats do well with a harness. Some cats roll around and fuss for a while and then get on with it."

Those cats, she says, would likely be good candidates for leash training. Do not force leash walking on fearful cats. Instead,

engage in daily play sessions with them inside using an interactive cat toy such as a feather wand.

For those cats who won't convert to indoor living, at least bring them inside before the sun goes down. To entice them to return at dusk, Dr. Moon-Fanelli says to feed them canned food at this time. Tap on the can, signaling that dinner is served.

For more suggestions on how to provide a satisfying indoor life for your cat, visit the website: [indoorpet.osu.edu](http://indoorpet.osu.edu). This information is part of the Indoor Pet Initiative created by Tony Buffington, DVM, a professor at Ohio State University's College of Veterinary Medicine. 



## FINDING YOUR LOST CAT

### Call Rescue Immediately If Your Cat Gets Out!

Oh no! You kitty got outside and you can't find her. Don't despair. There are some constructive steps you can take to help her get home again.

**FIRST – take action immediately;** don't wait for a few days to see if she will find her way home. Cats do not "run away" or "stray." They investigate new places and find themselves trapped, they get lost if driven away from their territory, they are spirited off by circumstances beyond their control, they become ill or injured and creep away to a quiet dark place. Cats rarely voluntarily leave their home, even if badly treated. It is imperative when a cat turns up missing to begin an aggressive search immediately. Your cat's life could depend on it.

**SEARCH HOUSE & IMMEDIATE AREA ---** Cats are excellent hidiers. Look first in your immediate area including checking the house carefully unless someone saw your cat get out. Look in every nook and cranny. Don't assume that your cat would never crawl into some tiny space or that they can't possibly fit (they will and do!). The more scared they are the deeper they will hide. Use a powerful flashlight even in the daytime.



Inside the home, check all appliances – under, behind and inside - washing machines, clothes dryers, stoves, refrigerators, dishwashers and water heaters. Cats LOVE boxes so check them all. Move everything from under beds, in closets, bookcases, shelves, drawers, cabinets...

Listen for sounds of distress. Cats explore weird spaces and can be attracted to dark, normally inaccessible places and even to vertical spaces. That's why you look behind and under appliances and in spaces you just don't think they could possibly fit. If you have been remodeling or making changes, had doors open to places like the attic, check these spaces remember cats are great explorers.

Thoroughly check your own yards-front, back and sides in case the cat has been injured or gotten stuck somewhere. Look under bushes, under cars, crawl spaces under the house, inside any shed or garage, drain pipes, culvert pipes... Don't forget to look up too – cats do climb so check roofs, overhangs, openings to attics, trees, gutters...

**WALK AROUND** – Once you have thoroughly searched your own area, start checking with the neighbors. Knock on doors and if home ask to look in their yards, garages, basements, etc. I had a cat that every time he got out would hide in my neighbor's garage. That was the first place I looked.

Start walking if you can while it is daylight but go out again after dark when it's quiet in your neighborhood. Do walk in the daytime to talk to people that wouldn't be out at night.

If you can, enlist a friend to walk with you but be sure he/she is the quiet type. Carry a powerful flashlight at all times you will need it to look under cars and into hiding places.

Talk to everybody you meet as you hand out the flyers, knock on doors. People getting into cars, walking by, the postman, everyone! Kids are great at finding pets so be sure to enlist the neighborhood children.

Ask not only if they have seen your cat but also if they heard or saw anything unusual in the neighborhood. Take a note pad with you so you can write down what they tell you. Sometimes utility workers can have manholes open or animal services might have been in the area picking up strays.

Sometimes cats climb into moving vans or parked cars and are not found immediately. Was such a vehicle in your area at the time of disappearance?

Carry something that smells like your cat and you and some good smelly cat tuna (or whatever her favorite flavor of wet food).

Call your cat's name and she might come out from hiding. Make any other noise that your cat is familiar with. It's also important to stop periodically, be quiet, and listen for your cat to make a noise in reply.

I found a kitty that got out in a totally strange neighborhood the night before. He was across the street and I just walked around after it was dark and quiet, calling his name and carrying some food he liked. After a little bit I heard him answer me from under a car. It still took over 2 hrs to get him to come out from hiding. Be patient.

When out looking, carry your cell phone, so you can call someone if you need help without leaving where your cat is once you spot her. If you do pick her up,

**expect her to bolt**, hold her firmly by the scruff at the back of the neck while supporting her with other arm. Best to wait until someone can come back with a carrier or carry a soft carrier with you IF your cat is not afraid of a carrier.

**SMELLS** – Remember cat's sense of smell is 3000 times ours so put some things outside that smell like



you and your cat. Cats bedding, worn t-shirts and socks, favorite wet and dry food, even used litter.

**FLYER** -- One of the best things you can do is make a flyer and put it into EVERYONE's mailbox in a several block radius of your home. Put a good description on the flyer and photo and the note **"PLEASE hold on to this flyer in case you see my kitty in the next few weeks or months"**. Offer a reward (don't state the amount). Include general address where lost (not exact home address), contact phone numbers and e-mail address.

If you make it in color even the better. People LOOK at color flyers more often than black and white ones, even ½ page size. Post it in businesses like laundromats, pet stores, video stores, cleaners, vets offices but again the most important ones will be in everyone's mailbox for several blocks from where your cat disappeared. I know of a couple that got their cat back after 3 months due to flyer in a mailbox.



More cats are reunited with their guardians because of flyers than anything else, so do one right away and don't be embarrassed to put it everywhere.

**LOCAL VETERINARIAN OFFICES** – Call ALL of the local veterinarian offices during the day and after 6pm call the emergency vet clinics too. Send them all flyers.

Ask if any cat even similar in description to your cat was brought to their offices for treatment. If it even remotely resembles your cat, visit the office in person or get more details as to where the animal is now. Descriptions rarely match, ages are often guessed wrong so you must go see the cat to be sure.

**ASK FOR HELP** – Don't be embarrassed to contact any Cat Rescue near you and ask for help. Rescue has a network throughout Southern California. We can also post on the Internet through different animal rescue related groups/lists.

If you are computer savvy, go on line and look for various websites that post lost animals. Even if you hate computers use the local free services of the newspapers, and weekly sale periodicals to describe you missing kitty. **Offer a reward.** Check the lost and found sections of all newspapers.

**VISIT SHELTERS** – Today many city and county shelters have websites. Call and get the web address or do a search on line in a search engine like Google.

Most city and County Shelters have a website with animal photos of cats coming into shelter. They guess-timate the age and can be way off so just look at the photos.

Visit all the shelters near you, ask to see ALL of the cats, many are not in public view if considered fractious (many of these are friendly scared cats) or sick. Leave flyers; do NOT expect to get a call from the shelter if a cat that looks like yours comes in, EVEN if they say they will call. You have to go back every 3 days (stray cats are held for 4 days in California so to be safe go every 3 days). If you are outside of California, check the local shelter guidelines.

**ACCIDENTS HAPPEN** – It's very sad but cats do get killed on streets. If you want to find out if this happened to your cat you must check with the correct state or city department. The road crews for your local and state department of transportation (DOT) usually pick up dead animals from the roadside and

city streets. In some cases Animal Control does this as well. You have to call around and find out which agencies do this service in your area. Be sure to find them all. This is a sad, sad task & some people don't want to know but others do. Some say they have to check every possibility or it haunts them not knowing. For this reason we included this information.

**KEEP LOOKING** – Don't give up in the first 2 weeks, cats have been reunited after being gone for months. Once your kitty is home pick up any flyers you posted in public places or businesses and give your cat a great big hug!!.

**WORDS OF CAUTION** -- It's sad but true, some people prey upon others' misfortune

NEVER respond to a "found" pet contact alone. Take a friend or two along with you. Arrange to meet in a public place.

NEVER invite the person to your home unless you happen to know them well.

Beware of money scams. A common one is a person calls you claiming to be a truck driver. He says he picked up your cat and is out of the city now. He heard about your lost cat and says he will return your cat if you will pay to ship her home. This person does not have your cat; he is only trying to take your money. If you want to be sure ask him to take a photo and text or mail it to you (give a work address or P.O. Box).

Never agree to give or mail money to anyone without having your cat in your arms. Anyone asking you to do this is trying to steal from you.

Don't wander around looking for your pet alone if you can help it, either during the day or at night. Always bring a friend or relative. This is especially important in unfamiliar neighborhoods.

## WAYS TO PROTECT YOUR CAT

### ALWAYS TRANSPORT YOUR CAT IN A CAT CARRIER, not a box but a plastic or soft-sided carrier.

I cringe every time someone says to me, "my cat hates to go in a carrier so I just carry her in my arms." There are a million things that can scare your cat and it can bolt from your arms, dash into traffic or go under a fence and hide in a totally strange place. Your cat will NOT come to you when it is frightened in a strange place, with strange smells and traffic noise around, it will



hide. Also if your car breaks down or you are in a car accident you can't leave your cat in the vehicle.

So please, NEVER take your cat to the vet or anywhere else unless it is secured in a sturdy carrier or on a leash. The boxes you buy at vets and pet stores are for one-time emergency trips. I had a cat break out of one in my car in less than 5 minutes and this was a friendly cat! In emergency situations use a pillowcase.

**ALWAYS KEEP A COLLAR ON YOUR INDOOR CAT** with a current phone number. I also add "Medical Covered" so someone will not hesitate to take my cat to the vet if injured. Use only a safety collar, one that stretches or breaks away so cat can get loose if tangled in something. DO NOT put a collar on a kitten; they do not weigh enough to make the collar break away.



**MICROCHIP YOUR CAT** or if already microchipped be sure to keep the database current, after your cat is missing is not the time to think about updating it. There are several major microchipping companies in the US that offer 24/7 coverage. Use the one most common in your area. Some of them are AVID, HomeAgain, 24-PetWatch... You can find out more about microchipping from your local animal shelters, humane societies, websites, rescue groups and vets.

**TAKE SOME GOOD, DETAILED PHOTOS** of your cat and keep them some place handy. Make them close-ups similar to what you would take of an object you are insuring. This is insurance for your cat. Take the head and the body and any interesting marks. For instance I once knew a cat with a perfect heart under her chin so her owner had a photo of that heart!

**TRAIN YOUR CAT TO COME** -- This may sound crazy but train your cat to come to an "Acme Dog Whistle". These are whistles that animals can hear a lot further than we can. They have a high pitch that is out of our hearing range. To train your cat, blow the whistle each time before you feed her or give her a treat. She will then be more likely to come to you or answer you if she hears the whistle when lost.

There are several articles, books and products for sale on the internet for training cats.





## CAT HEALTH 101: WHEN TO VISIT THE VET

It is a good practice to bring your cat to the veterinarian for an annual checkup. Even if your cat appears outwardly healthy, annual visits are important to monitor your cat's eyes, teeth and organs.

Cats can hide their problems well and early detection and treatment of illnesses can make a huge difference in the success of the treatment as well as its cost.

You should also bring your cat in for regular blood panels once she hits seven years of age. These can help detect the onset of organ failure, thyroid problems and other medical issues and get you treating them right away, ultimately prolonging the length and quality of your cat's life.

Of course, there are times when a cat's behavior or appearance tells you that she needs medical attention right away.

**Going Outside the Box:** When cats don't use the litter box, they almost always are trying to communicate that there is something wrong. The problem may be behavioral (i.e., stress, another animal they don't like, etc.), but it may also be medical.

- **Inappropriate urination:** This could be a sign of cystitis (bladder inflammation), a urinary tract infection or bladder or kidney stones. A dry food diet is a leading cause of these conditions. If your cat repeatedly enters the litter box without urinating or cries in pain when urinating, seek immediate medical attention, as this could be due to a ruptured bladder or a severe case of crystals.
- **Inappropriate defecation:** This could be a sign of colitis (inflammation of the colon) or a number of other bowel disorders, especially if there is bleeding the stool.

**Not eating:** An ongoing lack of interest of food can indicate a number of medical

problems and warrants a visit to the vet, especially for kittens or older cats that are more adversely affected by loss of calories. An overweight cat that goes longer than 48 hours without eating is in danger of developing Hepatitis Lepidus's (Fatty Liver Disease), which can be fatal.

**Hiding:** Hiding is an instinctive response to illness or any perceived threat. If your kitty is hiding, consider

the following checklist: is she eating and/or drinking regularly? Is she using the litter box regularly, with normal-appearing urine and feces? Is she listless (a possible sign of fever), hissing or growling (a possible sign of pain)? If there are problems in any of these areas, especially unusual hiding behavior, you should seek veterinary attention.

**Unusual hair loss:** Shedding warrants a trip to the vet if it is excessive, resulting in bald spots, or if it is accompanied by skin irritation, excessive grooming or other signs of illness. The presence of bald patches may indicate ringworm or mange, both of which are easily treatable and unlikely to spread if caught early and treated aggressively.

**Dental Disease:** Drooling, open-mouthed breathing and bad breath can all be signs of dental disease, and bacterial infections in the mouth can spread to other vital organs, causing irreversible damage. These problems can be prevented by requesting regular dental exams from your vet, who should show you how to do home exams as well. Also, your cat should receive regular dental cleanings.

**Excessive thirst (Polydipsia, or PD):** This condition generally leads to Polyuria (excessive urination). If your cat is drinking and/or urinating too frequently, it maybe necessary to have her under go a physical exam with a blood panel to measure organ function.

**Frequent vomiting:** While a little vomiting is not uncommon and not necessarily a cause of concern, excessive vomiting, especially in kittens and older cats, may warrant a vet trip, particularly when there are multiple episodes within a few hours. If there are other signs of illness present, go see the vet. And be especially alert to the presence of blood, parasites or bile (indicated by a bright yellow color).

**IF Your Cat Doesn't Eat for TWO Days Take Him to the Vet!**

**Unusual behavior:** When an older cat yowls loudly and paces at night, it is possible she is

suffering from either hyperthyroidism (also indicated by excessive thirst) or feline cognitive dysfunction, similar to Alzheimer's disease. An asthmatic cat may stand with her elbows out or breathe slowly and deliberately, while a cat with an upper respiratory infection will often breathe with her mouth open. These are just a few of the behavioral indicators that a vet visit may be in order.



## HOW TO SAVE MONEY AT THE VET'S OFFICE

The absolutely best way to save money on a vet visit is to go sooner rather than later...What I mean is DON'T WAIT until your cat is wobbling and almost falling over to go to the vet. If you do you will spend \$100s (if not \$1000s) more in hospitalization, IV fluids & antibiotics, especially if you wait until the weekend.

***Rule of thumb -- if a cat doesn't eat or drink water for two days take him to the vet no later than the morning of 3rd day. If the cat doesn't use the litter box or strains to pee -- take him to the vet!! Both of these can result in serious health issues such as a blockage that needs surgery since you waited to long to treat with antibiotics.***

You know your cat, any unusual behavior usually requires a vet visit. Once you get there you can save money by questioning the vet. Don't feel guilty if you don't say "yes" to every test available.

You have to learn when to say "no" to the proposed tests, lab work, etc. Some vets, like many doctors today want to run every test available because they now have the tools to do it but you as the cat owner pay for these tests.

I always question (politely) the Vet, is the treatment going to be any different as a result of the test? ...And if so how? What will the test tell us anything that you don't already know?

For instance, ringworm is a fungus very common in the ground and picked up by kittens and puppies. Any good vet can tell by looking at the skin abrasion with a black light that it's ringworm. Most vets will say, let's do a scraping and see what it tells us. The culture takes two weeks to grow to tell you the cat has ringworm, meanwhile had you started the treatment based on the vet's observations your cat would already be 1/2 way to recovering. Even vets that want to do a culture will usually start the cat on the internal medicine and topical cream. I always skip the scraping and culture and just start the treatment, saving me lab costs.

Another way to save money is to question the antibiotics prescribed if it's new to you. For example, Covenia is a newer antibiotic that is one injection and lasts for two weeks. It's great for treating feral cats but it's expensive and is not recommended for many illnesses. One vet I use charges \$70 for a Covenia shot vs. \$23 for Baytril, a much more effective antibiotic in many cases that is administered once a day.

Develop a good line of communications with your vet. If you don't feel comfortable discussing different treatments with your current vet maybe it's time to shop around and find one you can talk to.

Another way to save money is to DO THE ANNUAL checkup but don't say yes to every vaccine the vet has to offer. Indoor cats do not need, FeLV, FIV, FIP (these two aren't even recommended but many vets do them) & rabies (unless required by your city). After the first FVRCP booster, cats need one every 3 years.

Do say yes to a blood panel when you first get your kitty maybe at year one as a base. But then turn them down until at least 3 years later, then every 3 years unless your cat is sick. If it's sick a blood panel is a good starting point to see what is happening to the liver, kidney...

Sadly, some illnesses the vet knows is fatal but they still suggest running tests and spending \$100s of dollars knowing that there is no viable treatment. Ask the vet to be honest with you. A good example of this is some cancers, the treatment can run into the \$1000s but it rarely extends the life by 6 months. Other cancers are treatable and will cost less if detected early.

My last suggestion on how to save money at the vets is to feed good quality food. Cats that eat quality meat protein food, no corn, no glutens, no meat-by-products don't get fat and don't develop all the problems associated with it. Feed wet food.

In Summary:

Choose a vet early, as soon as you adopt a pet.

Be sure it's one you can talk to and has fair prices.

Don't wait until you have an emergency to find a vet.

Don't wait until cat is *really* sick to go to the vet.

Don't be afraid to question tests and treatment.

Do get an annual checkup for your pet.

Do feed good quality food.



## VET RECOMMENDATIONS

### **Alicia Pet Care Center**

25800 Jeronimo Road Suite 100  
Mission Viejo CA  
949-768-1313

### **Trinity Pet Hospital**

24861 Alicia Pkwy Suite D  
Laguna Hills CA  
949-768-1314

### **Ladera Ranch Animal Hospital**

Dr. Sumpter, Dr. Mauna  
949-347-6803  
1101 A-7 Corporate Drive  
Ladera Ranch, CA. 92694  
[www.laderavet.vetsuite.com](http://www.laderavet.vetsuite.com)  
open 7 days a week

### **OC Veterinary Medical Center**

Dr. Jeffery Horn  
200 S Tustin St, Ste. B  
Orange, CA 92866-2341  
714-633-3323  
open 7 days a week

### **Arbor Animal Hospital**

Dr. Daryl Mabley D.V.M.  
14775 Jeffrey Rd., Suite F, Irvine, CA 92618  
949-551-2727  
<http://www.arboranimalhospital.com>

### **Animal and Bird Clinic of Mission Viejo**

Dr. Bloch and Dr. Coward (doesn't push vaccinations)  
24912 Chrisanta, Mission Viejo  
949-768-3651  
[www.abcofmv.vetsuite.com](http://www.abcofmv.vetsuite.com)

Referred by Kim Rockshaw and several adopters

### **Laguna Beach Animal Hospital**

Dr. Lauren Craft  
460 Forest Ave, Laguna Beach, CA 92651  
949-494-9721  
Referred by Kim Rockshaw

### **Golden Lantern Animal Hospital**

Dr. Tom Saunders (not the other vets there)  
32545 Golden Lantern, #C, Dana Point, CA 92629  
949-493-1370  
Note: \$50-60 less on blood panels than other vets  
Referred by Kim Rockshaw

### **Moulton Animal Hospital**

Dr. Kimberly  
27261 - I La Paz Road. Laguna Niguel, CA 92677  
949-831-7297  
Referred by an SCR adopter

### **Lake Forest Animal Clinic**

Dr. Melissa Byers  
24301 Muirlands, Ste P, Lake Forest, CA  
(Muirlands & Ridge Route)  
949-837-7660  
Referred by an SCR adopter

### **Alisos Animal Hospital**

David Bahou, DVM  
22902 Los Alisos Blvd. #D, Mission Viejo, CA 92691  
949-768-8308  
Referred by an SCR adopter

### **All About Cats Health & Wellness Center**

Dr. Birgit Ankone DVM  
23661 La Palma Avenue  
Yorba Linda CA 92887  
714-692-8228, 714-692-1820  
dr-4-cats@sbcglobal.net  
<http://www.all-about-cats.com/>  
Referred by an SCR adopter

### **Companion Care Veterinary Hospital**

Dr. Michalena Sadowski  
16588 Bernardo Cenyer Drive, Suite 160  
San Diego, CA 92128  
858-451-0990  
(mixed reviews see Yelp.com)  
Referred by an SCR adopter

### **Talega Animal Hospital**

Dr. Robert Stone  
995 Avenida Pico, San Clemente, CA 92673  
(949) 481-8387

### **Arroyo PetCare Center**

David A Gordon, DVM  
1 South Pointe Dr, Lake Forest, CA 92630-5049  
949-770-1808  
Referred by an SCR adopter

### **Dr. Caroline Goulard, Holistic vet**

78 La Mirage Circle, Aliso Viejo, CA 92656  
949-836-3772  
c.goulard@cox.net  
Referred by an SCR adopter

**Irvine Veterinary Services, University Park**

Dr. Edward Cole  
 5401 University Drive, Irvine, CA 92612  
 949-786-0990  
<http://irvinevetservices.com/>  
 open 7 days a week  
 Dr Cole started this vet business about 30 years ago  
 Referred by an SCR adopter

**NOT RECOMMENDED:**

**Crown Valley Animal Care**, Crown Valley Pky, Laguna Niguel

**Dr. Fred at El Toro Animal Hospital**, El Toro Road, El Toro

**Banfield Pet Hospitals** (PetSmart) – prices very high & recommend unnecessary procedures/tests

**Laguna Hills Animal Hospital** – Recommended  
 euthanizing kitten with URI.

**OTHER RECOMMENDED SPECIALITIES:****UC Davis Veterinary Medicine**

Recommended for hard to solve medical problems  
<http://www.vetmed.ucdavis.edu/vmth/index.cfm>

**Dr. Patrick Melese**

board-certified Veterinary Behaviorist  
 San Diego, CA  
 858-259-6115  
<http://www.sdvethavior.com/>

**Dr. Jean Dodds DVM (holistic)**

Hemopet, Garden Grove, CA  
<http://www.hemopet.org/>

**Eye Care for Animals**

Dr. Blocker or Dr. Rebecca Burwell  
 3025 Edinger Ave, Tustin, CA 92780,  
 949-733-8271, (F) 949-733-8270  
<http://www.eyecareforanimals.com/>

**Kim Rockshaw (Homeopath Vet)**

949-366-6818  
 San Clemente, CA  
[www.kimrockshaw.com](http://www.kimrockshaw.com)  
 Referred by Linda Wilson, SCR

**EMERGENCY 24 HOUR:****Animal Urgent Care of So Orange County**

(next door to Mission Viejo Animal Shelter)  
 28085 Hillcrest, Mission Viejo, CA 92692  
 949-364-6228

**VCA All-Care Animal Referral Center**

18440 Amistad Suite E, Fountain Valley, CA 92708  
 714-963-0909  
 Highly recommended, many board certified vet specialists on staff, excellent 24 hour care.

**Central Orange County Emergency Clinic**

949-261-7979  
 3720 Campus Drive #D, Newport Beach, 92660  
<http://orangecountyemergencyvet.com/>

**Southern California Veterinary Specialty Hospital**

1371 Reynolds Ave., Irvine, CA 92614  
 (949) 833-9020

**CAT BOARDING FACILITY:****Cats Love Us** (*5 stars on Yelp.com*)

Joyce & Don Jerome  
 27601 Forbes Road, Laguna Niguel, CA 92677  
 949-582-1732  
<http://www.catsluvus.com/>  
 Referred by All of us, only boarding facility I would leave a cat.

## LOW COST SPAY & NEUTER IN OUR AREA (PRICES AS OF 5/2014)

### Animal Medical Center

16540 Harbor Blvd, Suite A

Fountain Valley, CA 92708

714-531-1155

<http://www.amcfv.com/>

Call for an appointment, sometimes takes a month to get one so plan ahead!

Spay cat: \$45

Neuter cat: \$30

Test FeLV/FIV: \$45

Spay Dog (goes by weight) – up to 20lb \$78; 90-100 lb \$150

Neuter Dog (goes by weight) – up to 20lb \$70; 90-100 lb \$115

Other services provided, call for details/costs

Hours: Monday-Friday 8am to 6pm,

Saturday 8am to 3pm

Bordetella Nasal: \$12.00

Corona: \$12.00 (Series of 2 - \$18.00)

Parvo Vaccine only: \$10.00

Lyme Disease Vaccine: \$17.00 (Series of 2 - \$30.00)

Heartworm Test: \$25.00

Nail Trim: \$12.00

### Dogs and Cats:

Office Visit exam by a licensed Veterinarian: \$15

Health Certificate: 16.00+Office visit exam

Pharmacy Medications: \$8.00+

Injection Fee \$9.00+Medication cost

Deworming: \$8.00+

Rabies: \$8.00

Fecal Exam: \$8.00

Skin Scrape: \$8.00

Ear Cleaning: \$12.00+

Anal Expression: \$15.00

### Golden State Humane Society - Animal Care Center

555 E. Artesia Blvd.

Long Beach, CA 90805

(562) 423 8406

#### Second location in Garden Grove:

11901 Gilbert St

Garden Grove, CA 92841

(562) 423-8406

Walk in Veterinary Hours: Mon.-Fri. 1pm-5pm,

Sat. 8am-1:00pm

Vaccination hours: Mon.-Fri. 9am-11:30am and

1pm to 5pm, Sat. 8am-1:30pm

Make sure you call for an appointment for spays/neuters!

#### Cat:

Spay/neuter: \$29.50

FVRCP (Series of 2) \$17.00 (recommended for teenagers & young adults)

FVRCP (Series of 3) \$22.00 (recommended for kittens)

FVRCP (4 in1): \$12.00

FeLV Test: \$15.00 or FeLV/FIV Test - \$25.00

FeLV Vaccine Series (2): \$24.00

FIP vaccine:\$17.00 **(WE DO NOT RECOMMEND – Not shown as effective)**

Cat Carrier Box: \$3.00

Nail Trim: \$9.00

#### Dog:

Spay/Neuter: \$39.50

DHPP/DHLPP (4 in 1): \$12.00

DHPP/DHLPP series of 2: \$21.00

DHPP/DHLPP series of 3: \$28.00 (for puppies)

Bordetella Booster: \$10.00

### Trinity Pet Hospital, aka Affordable Spay & Neuter

24861 Alicia Pkwy, Suite D, Laguna Hills, CA 92653

(949) 768-1314

<http://www.affordablespays.com>

Note: More expensive than two listed above but good prices for Orange County. Call for prices.

### <http://inlandempirerescues.webs.com/spayandneuterservices.htm>

Lists vets with good S/N prices in several counties including Orange County. Note: prices on website are out of date, call vet office for updated prices.

### <http://www.spaycalifornia.com>

To find other vets in California that do low cost S/N you can go to **www.spaycalifornia.com** - enter your zip code and it gives a listing of low-cost spay/neuter vets close to you. You will have to do some calling to confirm prices since some of the vets that list themselves as “low cost” are fairly high for a cat, like \$75 to \$95 and up to \$250 for a big dog spay.

Check your local city/county animal control to see if they have any special pricing arrangements with vets. . Check all Humane Societies near you, they often have low cost S/N programs.

Other ways to save money on spays and neuters – refuse all of the extras. Cone not needed. Pain meds are not needed on neuters or kittens. Young animals do not need a pre-anesthetic blood test.



# Favorite Cat Related Websites

## Health, Food & Behavioral Issues

<http://www.tuftscatnip.com/> - This is an excellent newsletter that takes NO advertisement from makers of cat products, reviews products and discusses health & behavioral issues.

<http://www.fabcats.org/owners/worming/info.html> - The website of the Feline Advisory Bureau, a charity dedicated to promoting the health and welfare of cats through improved feline knowledge of cat owners.

<http://www.catinfo.org/> - Dr. Lisa Pierson DVM. Excellent discussions on cat nutrition, pilling cats, litter box issues, vaccines...

<http://www.petplace.com/> - Dr. Jon link has a free informative email newsletter.

<http://www.ehow.com/pets/cats/cat-health/>-- eHow.com covers a lot of different issues concerning cat's health and behavior.

<http://www.catster.com/> - A free informative email newsletter with some good tips.

## Cat & Other Animals for Adoption

<http://www.southerncountiesrescue.org/> - This is our website. It shows the cats we have for adoption in Orange County. It also has many articles under **RESOURCES** like Bottle Feeding, Finding your lost Cat...

<http://www.petfinder.com/index.html> - This site allows you to search by zip code and animal breed.

<http://www.adoptapet.com/> - This site allows you to search by zip code and animal breed.

## Shopping for Something Different & Great Food Prices

<http://www.hauspanther.com/> - cats + design website with links to really cool, often very modern cat things such as cat trees, beds...plus ideas on things to make for cats.

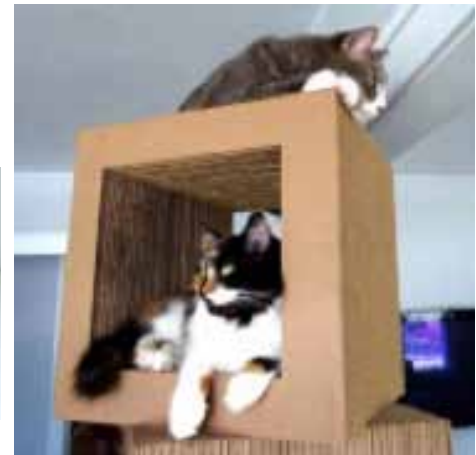
<http://www.petstrends.com/> - Wide selection of quality products.

<http://www.litter-robot.com/> - The only automatic litter box that really works, gets 4.5 stars based on Amazon 429 reviews. It's expensive but if you want an automatic box this is the one to buy.

<http://www.chewy.com/> - Best prices online for quality pet food and includes no tax and free shipping. Beats any local price, obviously this can change. I have a standing order shipping every two weeks to my door.

[www.chewy.com/rp/1588](http://www.chewy.com/rp/1588) - Use this link, they will donate \$20 to us after your first order.

<https://www.etsy.com/> - search under cat toys, beds, cat fountains, scratchers...



Visit us on Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/SouthernCountiesRescue>

As of May, 2014

## ABOUT SOUTHERN COUNTIES RESCUE

### *Who We Are and What We Do.*

Southern Counties Rescue is an all volunteer (no paid staff), non-profit, no-kill organization devoted to finding loving new homes for homeless cats and kittens in Imperial, San Diego and Orange Counties.

Founding members and adoption events of SCR were formerly part of Kitten Rescue, Los Angeles, LA's largest cat rescue organization.



microchipped, tested for feline leukemia (FeLV) and feline AIDS (FIV), and are spayed or neutered before going to their new homes.

Southern Counties Rescue holds bi-monthly adoptions at pet stores in San Juan Capistrano. Cats and kittens are also home shown to potential adopters.

In addition to rescuing and placing cats and kittens in need, Southern Counties Rescue is equally passion-

Many of our cats are rescued from high kill city shelters at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour – right before they are scheduled to be euthanized. We also take in friendly mom with kittens born in backyards, kittens born in feral colonies, and cats abandoned on the streets to fend for themselves. We are committed to making a difference in the lives of these animals. Every year Southern Counties Rescue rescues and places around 100 cats and kittens in the San Diego – Orange County areas.

Southern Counties Rescue does not have a shelter. All of our rescued cats and kittens are fostered in private homes where they are cared for by our volunteers until they are adopted. Dedicated volunteers care for bottle babies, moms with litters, cats that need socialization, and sick and injured animals.

Kittens are offered for adoption no earlier than eight weeks of age, with a minimum weight of two pounds and healthy. Potential adopters are screened for suitability. Cats and kittens are vaccinated, dewormed,

ate about reducing the number of strays and unwanted kittens by supporting all spay/neuter programs and educating the public on the need to fix their own pets and any cats that wander into their yards, especially if they are feeding them.

Unfortunately, we receive many more calls for help than we can answer. Volunteers are always needed to foster abandoned cats and kittens, staff adoption events, help with transportation, fundraising, assisting with web postings, paperwork or publicity and for numerous other jobs.

Donations are also welcomed to help defray the cost of rescuing injured animals and shelter animals and to pay the cost of basic veterinary care.

The average cost of each cat we rescue is much higher than our minimum adoption donation, so we rely on donations to let us save more animals.

**It takes a Community to Rescue. Some donate their time and home, others donate money to pay for the vets and food of the foster cats. We couldn't do it without everyone's help.**

**Please donate to allow us to keep saving lives.**

*100% of adoption fees and donations go toward rescuing more cats and kittens!*

*A 501(c)3 non-profit organization, tax ID # 45-4597576*

Please send donations to:  
Southern Counties Rescue  
PO Box 1399  
Brawley, CA 92227

*DONATIONS CAN ALSO BE SENT VIA PAYPAL TO [SOCOUNTIESRESCUE@ATT.NET](mailto:SOCOUNTIESRESCUE@ATT.NET)*