

# How to keep a new cat home

The easiest way to have a happy home cat is to keep them home right from the start.



## Set Up Checklist

- At least one vertical space per cat, plus one extra in separate locations
- At least one safe hiding space per cat, plus one extra in separate locations
- At least one scratch post per cat, plus one extra in separate locations
- At least one fresh water bowl per cat, plus one extra in separate locations
- At least one feeding station per cat, plus one extra in separate locations
- At least one litter tray per cat, plus one extra in separate locations
- Enrichment such as toys, cat grass and/or scents, in various locations
- House checked for anything toxic or dangerous
- Time set aside to give my cat attention each day
- At least one window with natural sunlight and a view

## Maintenance

- Scoop litter trays daily
- Completely empty, clean and refill litter trays regularly
- Check and refresh water daily
- Check whether scratch posts, litter trays and litter I've chosen for them

So, you've just adopted an adult cat and you're hoping to keep them at home. Great! Ideally, cats should have indoor and outdoor access to a safe, pleasant spot in your yard where they can't escape your property. When this isn't possible, the following information and tips will help you create a safe and stimulating indoor environment for your new cat.

## Big changes

When you adopt an adult cat you might not know much about them or their background. So it's best to keep changes to a minimum and go slow. Ask the previous owner or shelter for any information about how the cat has been living up until now and use this information as your starting point.

When moving a cat from one house to another, always keep them indoors for at least two weeks while they adjust. The best way to make your cat an indoor cat is to keep them inside at all times. However, mistakes happen, like a door is left open, or your cat finds a hole in a window you didn't know was there and suddenly your cat is outside again. First, try to fix the problem and keep them inside but if you are struggling to contain them, our Roam to Home four-week plan can help them with the adjustment.

## Settling In

Your new cat may be as brave as a lion and instantly want to start exploring your whole house, but for many cats, coming into a new home can be overwhelming, especially if there are other animals living there. To help your cat build confidence in their new space it's best to start by keeping them to a single room that is set up with everything they need.

As they feel more comfortable (good signs include eating and drinking well and using the litter tray without accident) you can begin to gradually open up the rest of the house to them.

Let them wander as far as they like, letting them sniff and explore. When they get tired or if they seem overwhelmed, take them back to their room.



## Natural born climbers

Cats are natural climbers and love to perch. Giving your cat stable vertical spaces to explore satisfies their natural instincts and provides a place to rest where they feel safe and secure.

### Vertical space could look like

- Cat trees and scratch posts.
- Cat shelves.
- Small beds placed in, or on top of, existing bookcases or cabinets.
- Have at least one vertical space per cat, plus an extra in separate locations as cats like choice.

## Cats need alone time too

Hiding spots give your cat a sense of ownership over their space and allow them to feel safe and relaxed. Hiding spots should be in a quiet location and household members should leave the cat alone when they go to this place.

### Hiding spots could look like

- A cardboard box.
- A hooded cat bed or 'igloo'.
- Space under your bed or in a cupboard.
- Aim for one hiding space per cat at a minimum.

## Let them scratch

Support your cat's natural instinct to scratch by giving your cat appropriate scratching places. Scratching helps to keep your cat's claws and paws healthy, lets them stretch out their muscles, and very importantly, is how your cat deposits pheromones (their way of communicating by smell) which helps them feel at home in your house.

### Scratching places could look like

- A scratch post or cardboard scratcher.
- A piece of carpet or surface covered in sisal rope.
- Place wherever your cat likes to scratch and make sure you have at least one per cat, plus an extra.

Cats have very individual tastes when it comes to scratching so try out a few different options and make sure to place your scratcher in an area your cat already likes to scratch (for example, next to the couch).



## Enrich their space

Cats need mental and physical stimulation to stay happy and healthy. Providing your home cat with enrichments is essential for their wellbeing and can reduce any unwanted behaviours.

### Enrichments could look like

- Toys rotated regularly to keep your cat interested.
- Interactive play with you.
- A perch next to a window with sunlight and a view.
- Interactive toys or food puzzle toys (don't use for regular feeding).
- Music or TV designed for cats, search 'cat music' or 'Cat TV' on the internet
- Cat safe plants like cat grass or cat mint.
- Training. Yep! Like dogs, cats can be trained with rewards and it stimulates their mind.

## Make your home cat-safe

Cats are curious creatures who love to explore, so it's important to make sure your house is safe for them. This includes securing windows, doors and furniture and removing dangerous substances.

### Some dangers to cats could look like

- Toxic plants.
- Medications.
- Human foods like onion, chocolate, grapes etc.
- Essential oils and cleaning products.
- Salt lamps.



## Fresh water

Cats are prone to urinary tract and kidney issues. To help prevent dehydration and other health issues, place fresh water in multiple places around the house. Bowls that can be easily cleaned are best and some cats prefer free flowing water from a drinking fountain. Keep their water separated and away from litter trays.

### Fresh water could look like

- Water bowls are emptied, rinsed and replenished daily and washed at least weekly.
- Drinking fountains that are cleaned weekly and have filters replaced as needed.
- At least one bowl for each cat and a backup.

## Let's talk litter boxes

Home cats still have the instinct to toilet like they would outside. The best way to support your cat's toileting instincts is to give them easy access to multiple clean, comfortable litter trays.

### A good litter tray set up could look like

- An open litter tray that is at least 1.5 times the length of your cat (you may have to try a few to find one your cat is comfortable using).
- At least one litter tray per cat plus an extra, in separate locations.
- Located in a quiet area of the house.
- Unscented litter that your cat feels comfortable using (you may have to try a few types).
- Kept clean with daily scooping.
- Regularly emptying, washing and drying the tray and replacing with fresh litter.

## Attention and affection

Cats need attention and affection just like any other pet. Make sure to spend time playing with your cat and give them plenty of cuddles and love. Don't force this, let your cat choose if and how they want to interact with you. If they don't feel like it, you will know and it's important to leave them be. If your cat doesn't like cuddles, find ways that they like interacting with you like play, training or being brushed

