

Keeping your new kitten home

Any easy way to have a happy home cat is to adopt a kitten and keep them home from the start.



Set Up Checklist

- At least one vertical space per kitten, plus one extra in separate locations
- At least one safe hiding space per kitten, plus one extra in separate locations
- At least one scratch post per kitten, plus one extra in separate locations
- At least one fresh water bowl per kitten, plus one extra in separate locations
- At least one feeding station per kitten, plus one extra in separate locations
- At least one litter tray per kitten, plus one extra in separate locations
- Enrichment such as toys, kitten grass and/or scents, in various locations
- House checked for anything toxic or dangerous
- 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
- Time for my kitten every day

Kittens that are brought up indoors usually adjust well to a home life because they have never known anything else. Ideally, cats should have indoor and outdoor access to a safe, pleasant spot in your yard where they can't escape your property.

If this isn't possible for you, you can still give your kitten a great start to help them be happy and healthy indoors, but it's important to set up your house to accommodate their needs. The following information and tips will help you create a safe and stimulating environment for your new kitten.

Settling In

Your new kitten may be as brave as a lion and instantly want to start exploring your whole house, but for many kittens coming into a new home can be overwhelming, especially if there are other animals living there. To help your kitten 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.

Two's company

Cats are social animals, although each individual cat varies in how sociable they'll want to be with other cats, animals and humans. If adopted together as kittens, cats can form incredibly strong, lifelong bonds with each other. It may be harder, but it's not impossible, to introduce two adult cats to each other, or bring in a new cat when your cat is used to living alone. To increase the chance of having a pair who are likely to get along, you could adopt two siblings, or a mother and her kitten together.



Having two cats means they both have company while you are out and provides more opportunities to play, be active and stimulated. It also means more cat cuddles and a little less work for you, as they can keep each other busy.

Natural born climbers

Cats are natural climbers and love to perch. Giving your kitten sturdy, safe 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, scratch posts or cat shelves.
- Small beds placed in or on top of existing bookcases or cabinets.
- Have at least one vertical space per kitten, plus an extra in separate locations as cats like choice.

Kittens need alone time too

Hiding spots give your kitten 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 kitten 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.
- Space in a cupboard.
- Have at least one hiding space per kitten, plus an extra in separate locations as cats like choice.

Let them scratch

Support your kitten's natural instinct to scratch with appropriate scratching places. Scratching helps to keep your kitten's claws and paws healthy, lets them stretch out their muscles, and very importantly, is how your kitten deposits pheromones (their way of communicating by smell) helping 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 where ever you kitten likes to scratch and make sure you have at least one per kitten, plus an extra in separate locations as cats like choice.

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 kitten already likes to scratch (for example, next to the couch).

Enriching their space

Kittens (and cats) need mental and physical stimulation to stay happy and healthy. Providing your kitten with enrichment is essential for their wellbeing and can reduce any unwanted behaviours.

Enrichment could look like

- Toys rotated regularly to keep your kitten interested.
- Interactive play with you.
- A perch at a window with sunlight and a good view.
- Music or TV designed for cats, search 'cat music' or 'Cat TV' on the internet
- Cat safe plants like cat grass or cat mint
- Cat safe scents like leaves and feathers.
- Training. Yep! Like dogs, cats can be trained with rewards and it stimulates their mind.

Make your home kitten-safe

Kittens 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 kittens could look like

- Toxic plants.
- Medications.
- Human foods such as onion, chocolate, grapes, or alcohol 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 kittens will still have the instinct to toilet like they would outside. The best way to support your kitten'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 kitten and allow for growth (you may have to try a few to find one your kitten is comfortable using).
- At least one litter tray per kitten plus an extra, in separate locations.
- Located in a quiet area of the house.
- Unscented litter that your kitten 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

Kittens (and cats) need attention and affection just like any other pet. Make sure to spend time playing with your kitten and give them plenty of cuddles and love. Don't force this, let your kitten 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 kitten doesn't like cuddles, find ways that they like interacting with you like play, training or being brushed.

