



Congratulations on adopting a cat! You are embarking on a wonderful and rewarding relationship. Because adopting a new cat comes with a lot of change for both cat and cat parent, we've compiled a checklist to help make the transition as smooth as possible.

**Questions for All Adopters:**

Do you have any other pets and how will they react to a new cat?

Is your current residence suited to the cat you're considering?

How will your social life or work obligations affect your ability to care for a cat?

Do you have a plan for your new cat during vacations and/or work travel?

How do the people you live with feel about having a cat in the house?

Are you (or your spouse, partner or roommate) intolerant of hair, dirt and other realities of sharing your home with a cat, such as allergies?

Do you or any of your household/family members have health issues that may be affected by a cat?

What breed is the best fit with your current lifestyle? (You can find information on specific breeds in PetFinder.com cat breed directory.)

Is there tension in the home? Pets quickly pick up on stress in the home, and it can exacerbate their health and behavior problems.

Is there an adult in the family who has agreed to be ultimately responsible for the cat's care?

**Other Considerations:**

If you are thinking of adopting a young cat, do you have the time and patience to work with the pet through its adolescence, taking playing, training and energy-level into account?

Have you considered your lifestyle carefully and



determined whether a younger or older cat would be a better match for you?

Can you train and handle a cat with behavior issues or are you looking for an easy-going friend?

Do you need a cat who will be reliable with children or one you can take with you when you travel?

Do you want a cat who follows you all around the house or would you prefer a less clingy, more independent character?

**Cat Costs:**

More likely than not, the adopting agency will charge a fee to help defray the cost of taking in unwanted or lost animals. The adoption fee you pay will be a tiny fraction of the money you will spend over the life of your pet.

You may need to pay for your adopted cat to be spayed or neutered before bringing him or her home.

Some expenses are mandatory for all pets, including:

- Food
- Routine veterinary care
- Licensing according to local regulations
- Collars and identification tags
- Kitty litter and box
- Basic grooming equipment and supplies

**Other expenditures may not be required but are highly recommended:**

- Permanent identification, such as a microchip or tattoo
- Additional grooming supplies or professional grooming (depending on your new cat's needs)
- A spare collar    A bed and toys    A crate or carrier
- Unexpected costs: Accidents and illness can result in costly emergency veterinary care. Recovery tools for finding a missing pet can include posters and rewards.

A cat with special physical or behavioral challenges may require specialized professional support to overcome any obstacles these issues present.

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HUMANE SOCIETY OF TUOLUMNE COUNTY

# ADOPTING A SHELTER CAT



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# ADOPTION TIPS FOR BRINGING YOUR NEW CAT HOME



Cats are particularly sensitive to new surroundings and some may hide under a bed or in a closet for days or even weeks.

You can avoid pitfalls with your new critter and help him/her adapt more easily by following these guidelines:

## **Before You Bring Your Cat Home:**

Cats are territorial, and coming into a new home leaves them feeling really uneasy. There's all that unexplored space, and who knows what may lurk there. Do him/her a favor and provide a small area to call his/her own for the first few days or weeks. A bathroom or laundry room works well. Furnish the room with cat amenities, such as food, water and a litter box. You'll want to spend time with your cat, so make sure there's a comfortable place for you to sit as well.

Fill a litter box with one or two inches of litter and place it in his/her room where he/she can use it undisturbed. After all, everyone deserves a modicum of privacy when pottying, and giving him/her that will help forestall litter box aversion.

Set up a feeding station with food and water bowls. Locate it away from the litter box.

Cats love to get away from it all in small places, and you can provide one for your new cat as his/her own little safe haven. If he/she came home in a cat carrier, that might be a good choice. If you prefer, you can buy a covered cat bed at a pet supply store. In either case, make sure the space is big enough for the cat to stand up and turn around in. Cat "feng shui" probably requires

that he/she be able to see the door to the room from his/her hidey hole, so he/she won't be startled.

A cat's claws need to be worn down, and they do this by scratching on things. Since you prefer that it not be your chairs and sofa, provide your cat with a socially acceptable scratching place. Some types are made of corrugated cardboard and lie on the floor; others are posts which have to be tall enough so that the cat can extend himself upward to scratch. You can encourage your cat (once he/she has arrived) to use the post by sprinkling it with catnip or dangling a toy at the top. He'll get the idea. You'll probably want a scratching post in each room where there is soft furniture, perhaps blocking access to it. You can also install sticky tape (available at pet supply stores) to corners of upholstered furniture to dissuade scratching.

Look at your house with a curious cat's eye view for its climbing and exploring potential. When your cat is acclimated to your home, you may be surprised to find him/her on top of the upper kitchen cabinets, so make sure there's nothing on display there or on other high shelves that can be damaged or knocked off.

Look for holes or registers that leave ductwork accessible and cover them up. A kitten can easily slither into one of these.

If possible, buy a cat tree for your new family member. Cats like to survey their territory, so a high perch is often a favored resting place.

If there are other human family members, go over the ground rules about your new pet. Remind them not to startle him/her and to keep the door to his/her room shut.

Bone up on how to introduce your cat to other pets. Keep his/her door closed and don't let your other pet race in unexpectedly.

## **First Day:**

Now, you are ready for your cat's homecoming. Preferably, bring him/her home in a cat carrier. It will feel safer to him/her. He/she has seen a lot of excitement, so take him/her directly to his/her new room. (Make sure the toilet lid is down, if he/she is to acclimate in your bathroom.) Ideally, you would restrict his/her exposure to the whole family, but naturally, everyone is going to want to see him/her. Remind them of the ground rules you've set up.

Sit on the floor and let him/her come to you. Don't force him/her. Just let him/her get acquainted on his/her own

time. If he/she doesn't approach, leave him/her alone and try again later. Some cats are particularly frightened, and he/she may retreat to his/her hidey hole and not come out when you're around at all. He/she may only come out at night when the house is quiet. Give him/her time.

Your newly adopted cat may not eat much or at all at first. It's best to give your cat the same food he/she had at the shelter, at least at first. Keeping some things familiar will make him/her feel more secure. Be sure to change his/her water frequently and make sure that he/she is drinking. If your cat hasn't eaten for a few days, call your vet to ask for advice.

## **Following Weeks:**

It may take your cat a week or two to adjust. Be patient.

Within a week of being adopted, take your newly adopted cat for his/her first wellness visit with a veterinarian. If you have a record of immunizations from the shelter, take it with you.

As your cat adjusts, he/she will show signs that he/she wants to explore outside his/her safe haven. Make sure other pets or family members won't startle him/her while he/she gradually expands his/her territory. He/she may be ready to play, so you can furnish some toys. Many cats like feather wands from the pet supply store, but homemade toys are often favored. A wad of a tissue paper to bat around or a paper bag to hide in can be fun.

Congratulations! If you follow these tips, you'll be on your way to having a well-adjusted feline family member.

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