

PETS IN NEED

FOUNDED 1965

CAT ADOPTION HANDBOOK

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I. THANK YOU

PETS IN NEED is delighted to have helped you adopt your newest feline family member. We hope our information booklet will provide the answers to questions you may have concerning proper care.

If you need further assistance, the Pets In Need staff will be more than happy to help you.

If you adopted from our Redwood City shelter, contact us at (650) 367-1405 or adoptions@petsinneed.org.

If you adopted from our Palo Alto shelter, contact us at (650) 496-5971 or adoptionspa@petsinneed.org.

II. KITTY'S NEW HOME

It is a good idea to introduce your cat to their new environment slowly. Make sure your cat knows where the litter box is located. You should keep them isolated in one room for at least the first day, keeping established animals away.

ADJUSTMENT PERIOD

It is very important to give your new cat time to adjust. It may take several weeks for your cat to feel comfortable in their new home.

Your cat may hide initially, perhaps even for several days. Unless necessary, **never drag them out of their hiding place**. Your cat will appear when they start to feel more comfortable.

Your cat may exhibit behavior problems for a short time; going to a new home is a big and stressful change. These usually disappear when handled with understanding and consistency. Spend as much time as possible with your new cat. Your gentle reassurance will help your cat acclimate to their new home.

Unless there are secure screens on your windows and doors, keep them closed. Make sure your cat is wearing an identification tag on a breakaway collar **at all times**.

SLEEPING ARRANGEMENTS

Unlike dogs, who can be trained to sleep in one area, cats like to choose their own sleeping spots. To discourage your cat from sleeping on furniture, you may wish to provide them with a cozy bed in a quiet corner, away from drafts. Do not be disappointed, however, if your cat does not use it!

If you permit your cat to sleep on furniture, they can be trained to avoid your best sofa or chair. We suggest placing a washable cover on their favorite snoozing spot.

III. INTRODUCING YOUR NEW CAT TO YOUR RESIDENT CAT



While some are more social than others, cats are wonderful companions to each other. An 8-year-old cat that has never been around other animals may need several weeks or even months to learn to share her territory (and her people) with other pets in the household. However, a very young or very social cat may need only a few days. Cats are territorial and need to be introduced slowly in order to give them time to get used to each other before there is a face-to-face confrontation. Slow introductions help prevent fearful and aggressive problems from developing.

CONFINEMENT

Confine your new cat to one medium-sized room with her litter box, food, water and a bed. Feed your resident cat and the newcomer on opposite sides of the door to this room. This will help both of them to associate something enjoyable (eating!) with each other's smells. Don't put the food so close to the door that the cats are too upset by each other's presence to eat. Gradually move the dishes closer to the door until your pets can eat calmly, directly on either side of the door.

SWAP SCENTS

As long as neither cat is sick, the second step is swapping scents. Switch sleeping blankets or beds between your new cat and your resident cat so they have a chance to become accustomed to each other's scent. Rub a towel on one cat and put it underneath the food dish of the other cat. You should do this with each cat in the house.

SWITCH LIVING AREAS

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

CONTACT STAGE

Do short, supervised meetings, then increase the time together based on behavior.

AVOID FEARFUL AND AGGRESSIVE MEETINGS

Avoid any interactions between your cats that result in either fearful or aggressive behavior such as growling, hissing, swatting, chasing, or stalking. If these responses are allowed to become a habit, they can be difficult to change. It's better to introduce your cats to each other gradually so that neither animal becomes afraid or aggressive. If either cat becomes fearful or aggressive, separate them, and start over with the introduction process in a series of very small, gradual steps, as outlined above.

TIPS

- If one of your cats has a medical problem or is injured, this could stall the introduction process. Check with your veterinarian to be sure that all of your cats are healthy, especially if you have adopted this cat from a shelter.
- You should have at least one litter box per cat plus one, and you'll need to clean all of the litter boxes more frequently. Make sure that none of the cats are being "ambushed" by another while trying to use the litter box.

- Try to keep your resident cats' schedule as close as possible to what it was before the newcomer's appearance.
- Your goal is to avoid any outright fights, but if small spats do occur between your cats, you shouldn't attempt to separate the cats by picking up one cat or getting between them with your hands or body parts. Instead, either make a loud noise to separate the cats or throw a blanket over them. Then give them a chance to calm down and go back to the steps in the introduction process. Make sure to avoid punishment. It won't work and could make things worse.
- Be sure each cat has a safe hiding place from the other.

IV. INTRODUCING YOUR NEW CAT TO YOUR OTHER PETS

It's important to have realistic expectations when introducing a new pet to a resident pet. Some cats are more social than other cats. For example, an eight-year-old cat that has never been around other animals may never learn to share her territory (and her people) with other pets in the household. However, an eight-week-old kitten separated from her mom and littermates for the first time might prefer to have a cat or dog companion. Cats are territorial and need to be introduced to other animals very slowly in order to give them time to get used to each other before there is a face-to-face confrontation. Slow introductions help prevent fearful and aggressive problems from developing. PLEASE NOTE: When you introduce pets to each other, one of them may send "play" signals that can be misinterpreted by the other pet. If those signals are interpreted as aggression by one animal, then you should handle the situation as "aggressive."

PRECAUTIONS

If one of your pets has a medical problem or is injured, this could stall the introduction process. Check with your veterinarian to be sure that all of your pets are healthy. You'll also want to have at least one litter box per cat, and you'll probably need to clean all of the litter boxes more frequently. Make sure that none of the cats are being "ambushed" by another while trying to use the litter box. Try to keep your resident pets' schedule as close as possible to what it was before the newcomer's appearance. Cats can make lots of noise, pull each other's hair, and roll around quite dramatically without either being injured. If small spats do occur between your cats, you shouldn't attempt to intervene directly to separate the cats. Instead make a loud noise to separate the cats or throw a blanket over them. Then give them a chance to calm down before re-introducing them to each other.

Make sure to avoid punishment. It won't work and could make things worse. Finally make sure each cat has a safe hiding place.

Cat to Dog Introductions

Dogs can kill a cat very easily, even if they are only playing. All it takes is one shake and the cat's neck can break. Some dogs have such a high prey drive they should never be left alone with a cat. Dogs usually want to chase and play with cats and cats usually become afraid and defensive. Use the techniques described above to begin introducing your new cat to your resident dog. In addition:

PRACTICE OBEDIENCE

If your dog doesn't already know commands "sit," "down," "come," and "stay," you should begin working on them. Clicker training is a good way to train your dog these commands (see our handout: "Dog Clicker Training"). Small pieces of food will 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 these commands, work on obeying commands in return for a tidbit of food.

CONTROLLED MEETING

After your new cat and resident dog have become comfortable eating on opposite sides of the door, and have been exposed to each other's scents as described above, you can attempt a face-to-face introduction in a controlled manner. Put your dog's leash on, and using treats, have him sit or lie down and stay. Have another family member or friend enter the room and quietly sit down next to your new cat, but don't have them

physically restrain her. Have this person offer your cat some special pieces of food or catnip. At first, the cat and dog should be on opposite sides of the room. Lots of short visits are better than a few long visits. Don't drag out the visit so long that the dog becomes uncontrollable. Repeat this step several times until both the cat and dog are tolerating each other's presence without fear, aggression, or other undesirable behavior.

LET YOUR CAT GO

Next, allow your cat freedom to explore your dog at her own pace, with the dog still on-leash and in a "down stay." Meanwhile, keep giving your dog treats and praise for his calm behavior. If your dog gets up from his "stay" position, he should be repositioned with a treat lure, and praised and rewarded for obeying the "stay" command. If your cat runs away or becomes aggressive, you're progressing too fast. Go back to the previous introduction steps.

POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT

Although your dog must be taught that chasing or being rough with your cat is unacceptable behavior, he must also be taught how to behave appropriately and be rewarded for doing so, such as sitting, coming when called, or lying down in return for a treat. If your dog is always punished when your cat is around, and never has "good things" happen in the cat's presence, your dog may redirect aggression toward the cat.

DIRECTLY SUPERVISE

All Interactions between Your Dog And Cat You may want to keep your dog on-leash and with you whenever your cat is free in the house during the introduction process. Be sure that your **cat has an escape route, high perches, and a place to hide**. Keep your dog and cat separated when you aren't home until you're certain your cat will be safe.

PRECAUTIONS

Dogs like to eat cat food. You should keep the cat food out of your dog's reach (in a closet or on a high shelf). Eating cat feces is also a relatively common behavior in dogs. Although there are no health hazards to your dog, it's probably distasteful to you. It's also upsetting to your cat to have such an important object "invaded." Unfortunately, attempts to keep your dog out of the litter box by "booby trapping it" will also keep your cat away as well. Punishment after the fact will not change your dog's behavior. The best solution is to place the litter box where your dog can't access it, for example: behind a baby gate; in a closet with the door anchored open from both sides and just wide enough for your cat; inside a tall, topless cardboard box with easy access for your cat.




A WORD ABOUT KITTENS AND PUPPIES

Because they're so much smaller, kittens are in more danger of being injured, or being killed by a young energetic dog, or by a predatory dog. A kitten will need to be kept separate from an especially energetic dog until she is fully-grown. Usually a well-socialized cat will be able to keep a puppy in its place, but some cats don't have enough confidence to do this. If you have an especially shy cat, you might need to keep her separated from your puppy until he matures enough to have more self-control.

V. The 3-3-3 Rule

The 3 Days, 3 Weeks, 3 Month Rule of Adopting a Rescue Dog

The 3-3-3 rule is a general guideline, every cat is unique and will adjust differently. Give your cat space and allow them to go at their own pace.

3D	3W	3M
		
<p>In the first 3 days</p>	<p>After 3 weeks</p>	<p>After 3 months</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Feeling overwhelmed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Starting to settle in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Finally completely comfortable in their home
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ May be scared and unsure of what is going on 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Feeling more comfortable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Building trust and a true bond
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Not comfortable enough to be “themselves” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Realizing this could possibly be their forever home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Gained a complete sense of security with their new family
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ May not want to eat or drink 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Figured out their environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Set in a routine
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Shut down and want to curl up and hide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Getting into a routine 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Testing the boundaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Lets their guard down and may start showing their true personality 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Behavior issues may start showing up 	

VI. CATS AND YOUR FAMILY

CHILDREN

Although Pets In Need encourages all family members to become involved in caring for your cat, do not expect your children to assume all responsibility. A cat can be a child's playmate or friend, but it is important that children be taught proper respect and handling of your cat. Never leave young children alone with a new cat. Remember that children don't innately know how to interact with cats; it's important to teach children how to be gentle and to provide corrections when needed.

A cat is not a toy to be tugged or teased. Children must learn to respect your cat's need to sleep and eat undisturbed. Make sure children learn how to properly pick up the cat: one hand under the chest and the other supporting the hindquarters.

INDOOR VS. OUTDOOR CATS

Every year thousands of cats are hit by cars, lost, stolen, poisoned, or injured. Some are strays but many are beloved family members who, given freedom to roam, have met with an untimely end.

Cats confined strictly indoors generally live longer, are healthier and can be just as happy and well-adjusted as those allowed to live outdoors. Many people view indoor cats as "prisoners." This is just not true. Cats kept indoors and given a stimulating environment with toys, scratching posts, perches, and windowsills to sit on and watch the world go by are perfectly happy. A companion cat can also help to keep life interesting. Cats used to the outdoor life may take time to adjust, but with patience and perseverance they too usually settle in happily to the security of being indoors.

Indoor cats will find sunny spots for cat-naps and get fresh air through opened, screened windows and doors. Never allow your cat to sit on balcony rails or in open windows high above the ground.



VII. FEEDING

Upon adoption, you will have been provided some of the food your cat was eating. If you decide to change the food, we recommend that you make the change gradually. Sudden changes in diet can lead to vomiting and/or diarrhea. We also encourage you to consult with your veterinarian to determine the best diet for our new pet.

Contrary to popular belief, many cats do not like cow's milk, and giving milk to your cat or kitten may give them diarrhea and is not recommended.

WHEN TO FEED

Most cats like to snack throughout the day and enjoy having a bowl of dry food available at all times (free feeding). Multiple cats will usually eat from the same bowl throughout the day.



Even if you are free feeding, you should feed the specific amount of food they need for the day so that they don't put on excessive weight. It is very important not to overfeed, as overweight cats suffer from poor health.

Check with your veterinarian to determine the best feeding plan for your cat or kitten.

Never feed your cat or kitten close to their litter box! Contamination between the litter box and food can cause health issues. And after all, we don't like being seated by the restroom when we're dining!

VIII. LITTER BOX TRAINING

Most cats and kittens can easily be trained to use the litter box. Ensure a clean box is always available and that your cat knows where it is. Your new cat may make a "mistake" when first acclimating to their new environment. If this happens, neutralize odors by cleaning the area with a 50/50 solution of white vinegar and water. Commercial enzyme products, such as "Nature's Miracle," also work well.

It is frustrating when a cat fails to use their litter box. Patience and praise are essential to solving this dilemma. There are many reasons for this problem. Common ones include:

1. Your cat doesn't like the type of litter (clay, pine, crystal, etc.). Try a different type.
2. The location of the litter box is unacceptable (not private enough, too near food dishes, etc.)
3. The litter box is not being kept clean enough. Remove feces daily.
4. Your new cat is attracted to odors in an area where another cat has eliminated. Clean the area with an enzyme-based odor remover.
5. Your cat has a health problem, such as diarrhea, parasites, or a urinary infection. Take them to a veterinarian.
6. Your new cat is stressed by other animals or young children.
7. Cats cannot tolerate perfumed or volatile scents. Avoid highly fragranced disinfectants as well as ammonia when cleaning the litter pan. Rinse boxes thoroughly with hot water.

Confining your cat to a restricted area that contains their bed, litter box, food, and water when you are not there to supervise may help with litter training.

IX. BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS

Besides occasional problems with litter training, cats may sometimes exhibit other behaviors that you may find undesirable. These include clawing furniture, climbing drapes, jumping onto counters and chewing houseplants.

Sharpening claws is an instinctive and necessary behavior for cats. However, when your cat decides to do it on your best sofa or new drapes, you may not be happy! Provide your cat with scratching posts or natural logs. Encouraging cats to use the posts requires patience and consistency. Position the post in favored locations, such as near sleeping spots. Rubbing catnip on the post helps as well.

To discourage scratching, drape fine netting over furniture (cats hate to snag their claws on it). Trimming your cat's nails regularly should help alleviate much of your cat's need to scratch. You might also consider nail caps available at pet stores or at your veterinarian.

DECLAWING

Pets In Need strongly advocates against declawing! Your cat's claws are as important to them as your fingers are to you. If a declawed cat ends up outside, they cannot climb away from danger and have no defense from dogs, other cats in the neighborhood or wild animals. Their sense of balance may be permanently altered because they lack the last toe joint.

Some cats undergo profound personality changes after being declawed, becoming extremely timid or aggressive. Some declawed cats quickly resort to biting.

Declawing is the amputation of the last joint of each toe, which would be like cutting off the tips of your fingers at the first joint. Surgery and aftermath are extremely painful and today many veterinarians refuse to perform it.



X. IDENTIFICATION

Your cat should wear a breakaway collar (one that has a piece of elastic sewn into it) and an identification tag at all times. If your cat should escape, a collar ID will greatly increase his/her chance of being reunited with you.

Microchipping, a procedure that involves implanting a small, scannable rice-sized microchip between the cat's shoulder blades, is a highly effective and permanent way to identify your cat. PIN has already microchipped your newly adopted cat or kitten. If you have other cats at home, ask your vet about microchipping them.

IF YOUR CAT IS LOST

1. **Start your search immediately.** Ask neighbors, post to sites like NextDoor and Pawboost.
2. Check local animal shelters. If your cat isn't there, you can file a lost report. Some shelters offer trap rentals.
3. Post flyers with a photo of your cat within a six-block radius and at local vets and shelters.
4. Check that your contact information is up-to-date with your cat's microchip company.

Remember, do not give up too easily. Many cats wander for weeks, even months, before being rescued and taken to a shelter.

XI. LOCAL VETERINARY CLINICS

Campbell

VCA Bascom Animal Hospital
(408) 371-5630
2175 S Bascom Ave

VCA Winchester Animal Hospital
(408) 378-4380
2110 Winchester Blvd

Cupertino

Acadia Veterinary Clinic
(408) 844-4575
10012 N Foothill Blvd

Cupertino Animal Hospital
(408) 252-6380
10026 Peninsula Ave

Los Altos

Adobe Animal Hospital
(650) 948-9661
4470 El Camino Real

Los Altos Veterinary Clinic
(650) 948-8287
440 First St

Los Gatos

Adobe Animal Hospital South Bay
(408) 354-9530
15965 Los Gatos Blvd

VCA Animal Hospital Los Gatos
(408) 354-9530
524 N Santa Cruz Ave

Mountain View

Alta-View Animal Hospital
(650) 948-1021
690 Showers Dr

Alpine Animal Hospital
(650) 969-8555
460 W. El Camino Real

Miramonte Veterinary Hospital
(650) 962-8338
1766 Miramonte Ave

Menlo Park

Peninsula Pet Hospital
(650) 325-4300
548 Glenwood Ave

Palo Alto

The Animal Doctors
(650) 325-1343
461 Page Mill Rd

Animal Hospital of Palo Alto
(650) 493-2738
4111 El Camino Real

VCA Palo Alto Animal Hospital
(650) 493-4233
3944 El Camino Real

Portola

Portola Valley Veterinary Clinic
(650) 851-3244
884 Portola Rd

Redwood City

SAGE Veterinary Centers
(650) 417-7243
934 Charter St

Mid-Peninsula Animal Hospital
(650) 325-5671
2707 El Camino Real

Woodside Veterinary Clinic
(650) 365-3855
1725 Woodside Rd #F

San Carlos

Sequoia Veterinary Hospital
(650) 369-7326
255 Old County Rd

VCA San Carlos Pet Hospital
(650) 591-5718
718 El Camino Real

VCA Holly Street Animal Hospital
(650) 631-7400
501 Laurel St

San Jose

Evergreen Veterinary Clinic
(408) 238-0690
1611 E Capitol Expy

Pinnacle Animal Hospital
(408) 264-9400
4724 Meridian Ave

San Jose Animal Hospital
(408) 453-2524
940 Berryessa Rd

Story Road Animal Hospital
(408) 292-6600
1241 Story Rd

Willow Glen Pet Hospital
(669) 342-7472
860 Willow St, #500

West Valley Pet Clinic
(408) 996-1155
1360 S De Anza Blvd

VCA Crocker Animal Hospital
(408) 272-1330
475 N Jackson Ave.

VCA Blossom Hill Animal Hospital
(408) 227-3717
955 Blossom Hill Rd

Birds & Exotics

Wildwood Veterinary Hospital
(408) 265-8811
1115 Luchessi Dr
San Jose, CA 95118

Wildwood Veterinary Hospital
(650) 366-9453
2900 Spring St, #5
Redwood City, CA 94063

San Mateo

Aragon Veterinary Clinic
(650) 342 7282
819 S B St

Crystal Springs Pet Hospital
(650) 341-3438
122 De Anza Blvd

Laurelwood Pet Hospital
(650) 341-7741
1334 W. Hillsdale Blvd

VCA Bayshore Animal Hospital
(650) 342-7022
233 N Amphlett Blvd

VCA San Mateo Animal Hospital
(650) 342-1655
2320 Palm Ave

Santa Clara

Animal Health Center
(408) 675-1889
2078 El Camino Real, Ste A

Santa Clara Pet Hospital
(408) 296-5857
830 Kiely Blvd, #107

Silicon Valley Pet Clinic
(408) 248-3844
3100 El Camino Real

VCA Lawrence Animal Hospital
(408) 246-1893
771 Lawrence Expressway

VCA Vets and Pets
(408) 246-1893
3345 El Camino Real

Sunnyvale

Arroyo Animal Clinic
(408) 241-4450
1211 Sycamore Terrace

Pet's Friend Animal Clinic
(408) 739-2688
158 San Lorenzo Ave

Cherry Chase Pet Hospital
(650) 961-4550
1297 W. El Camino Real

ELC Veterinary Clinic
(408) 737-2333
832 E Fremont Ave

Murphy Avenue Pet Clinic
(408) 733-7387
101 W Hندی Ave

Vaccine Clinics

Vetco Clinics

At Petco stores, by appointment only
Vetcoclinics.com

VIP Petcare

Mobile clinic
Vippetcare.com/find-a-location/