

Cat Care Tips for Pet Parents



Patricia Martin – Author
Tess Greenwood – Co-Author

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Ways To Show Your Cat How Much You Care (Love, Pets and Attention)

- Set aside time to give your full attention
- Stroke, pet, and scratch all their favorite spots
- Fun toys for playtime for you both to interact
- Meet their needs by keeping their water clean, bellies full, and litter boxes empty
- Keep current with vaccinations, and trips to the vet if you suspect anything amiss
- **REMEMBER: A loved cat means a happy cat!**

“People Foods” You CAN Share With Your Cat

- Lean Meat – cats are carnivores; lean meat like ground beef, chicken, turkey, or fish are excellent snacks
- Eggs – scrambled are the safest, can be added to their meal once in a while
- Cheese – if not lactose intolerant. In moderation, can be used in training
- Green Beans – low in calorie, high in fiber
- **REMEMBER: All snacks should be given in moderation!**

Signs Your Cat Is Angry

- Vocalizations – hissing, growling, spitting or emitting a guttural moan. All signal that the cat is saying “Hey, back off”!
- Tail Signals – flicking back and forth quickly indicate an irritated cat
- Eye Signals – dilated or constricted pupils
- Ear Signals – ears will lay flat, either towards the side or back of head
- Swatting – cat wishes to not be touched
- **REMEMBER: Moods can quickly change from happy to upset!**

What Causes Obesity In Cats?

- Free Feeding – set up regular feeding schedules and feed according to instructions on the back of bag or can of food
- Cat Treats – limit how many you feed, and only for special occasions
- Nutrition – Cats are carnivores, and diets need to be meat-based and balanced; meat provides the necessary vitamins and amino acids.
- **REMEMBER: Cats who are obese typically have more health problems**

What Can Cat Poop Tell You About Your Cat's Health?

- Color – normal stool should be deep shade of brown; abnormal colors are yellow, red, or black.
- Consistency – stool should be firm, but not too hard, and remain in the shape of a sausage. If too hard to pass, cat could be dehydrated
- Diarrhea – common issues are inflammatory bowel disease, kidney or liver disease, hairballs, or sudden change in diet. Check with your vet if symptoms do not go away between 24-48 hours.
- **REMEMBER: Watch for inconsistencies in your cat's poop**

Ways You're Accidentally Enabling Your Cat's Bad Behavior

- If the behavior isn't "normal" for your cat, it could be a medical problem. Schedule an appointment with your vet
- Giving in – this is the quickest way to reinforce your cat's bad habits. Try not to give positive attention if the cat is behaving badly
- Bedtime - try not to give in to a meowing cat in the middle of the night; it will only teach them it's acceptable to wake you
- **REMEMBER: Be wise, and try not to enable bad habits!**

Signs Your Cat Could Have Urinary Issues

- Lying in a different space
- Increased drinking and/or urinating
- Changes in the litter box, urinating outside the box, or frequent trips to the box
- Straining to urinate
- Presence of blood or mucus in the urine, or
- Change in odor or color of the urine
- **If ANY of these symptoms apply, see your veterinarian!**

Why Cats Sleep So Much

- Cats need sleep for top performance for chasing, feline frolicking and hunting
- You sleep at night while cats prowl the house, so sleep is needed during the day. Cats are “crepuscular” – meaning they are most active during dawn and dusk
- Cats have two levels of sleep: catnap and the deep sleep
- **REMEMBER: Respect a cat when sleeping - either deep or catnap!**

Tips For Reducing Your Cat's Stress During A Move

- Get them used to a carrier before the move – leave it out and open with favorite toy or blanket far in advance of the move. Move on to feeding them inside, then playing with them after you've closed them in for a bit
- Bring in moving boxes early – so the cat can get used to them before they suddenly fill the whole house
- On moving day, keep your cat in the carrier, and with plenty of ventilation when the cat is in the car
- Pack separate bags with your cat's food, their bowl, and toys, so they're accessible when you reach your new home
- Cover the carrier with a sheet or blanket since a view of the moving world can be upsetting
- Keep your cat's vaccination and health records handy, since many states require them
- If your move is long one, find a pet friendly hotel.
- When you arrive at your new home, confine the cat to one room until everything has been moved in. Let your cat explore the new house slowly
- Put your cat's things in familiar locations – if your cat's litter box was in the bathroom at your old home, do the same at your new home. Don't change routines or feeding schedules until your cat has had time to adjust
- **REMEMBER: Embrace your move but respect your cat's adjustment!**

Why You Should Never Trim Your Cat's Whiskers

- They help cats move in the dark. They use their whiskers to feel nearby objects without their entire body brushing up against it
- They help locate prey – whiskers detect the tiniest vibration from movement, even when their eyes are closed
- **REMEMBER: Whiskers are important!**

Why Does My Cat Suddenly Zoom Around the Room?

- Fits of frenetic energy are used to burn off pent-up pep
- Cats zooming at night – biology is telling the cat it's time to hunt
- Tap into the cat's hunting instincts by playing during the day
- **REMEMBER: It's natural for a cat to ZOOM!**

Ways Your Cat Can Enjoy The Outdoors In Safety

- Leash Training – start the training as young as possible; use treats and positive reinforcement
- Harness and Lead – if cat isn't a fan of walks, use a harness.
- Kitty Stroller – specifically designed for pets; mesh panels keep the cat secure and allows for it to soak up the sights, sounds, and smells
- Cat Carrier - try to purchase one with mesh panels on the sides for optimum visibility
- Outdoor Cat Playpen – more space, can run, lounge, and observe
- Build a Catio or enclosed area on your home where you cat can enjoy fresh air and sunshine, but be safe from predators
- **REMEMBER: Use the Internet, or library, to learn about these items!**

Strange Things Cats Do

- “Airplane Ears” – flatten ears back and down usually when annoyed. Cat needs some space
- Bunting (or head bumping) with humans or other animals as a cat’s way of saying “we belong together”
- Caching – when the cat tries to cover or bury their food. In the wild, they hid their food from other predators, so it’s a natural instinct
- Sideways Hop – ultimate move of a cat at play. Also a way of puffing up and looking intimidating
- “Splooting” – laying on bellies with both the feet front and back legs extended all the way out. Allows for cooling off on hot days
- Wood or Fabric Sucking – stems from kittenhood and helps a cat to feel comfort and less stress
- **REMEMBER: Cats need space, playtime, and lots of love!**

Why Do Cats Love To Knock Things Over?

- In the wild, they toy with their prey; domestic cats have the same instinct
- Cats will see any small object to paw as if it was going to “run away”
- Cats also learn very quickly that knocking things over gets attention
- Give you cat plenty of toys and rotate them regularly to keep cat interested may help them not to use *your* stuff as a toy
- If nothing works, you should cat-proof your house making sure nothing breakable is lying where you cat can break it
- **REMEMBER: It’s natural for a cat to knock items over!**

Things Humans Do That Cats Dislike

- Not keeping the litterbox clean. One litter box per cat; scoop at least one to two times per day
- Offending kitty's ears with loud noises. Cats have sensitive ears. They're built to hear small skittering prey. Keep loudness down to a minimum
- Ignoring odd behavior like persistent scratching, sudden lack of interest in grooming. See your vet if odd or unusual behaviors persist
- Introducing a stranger. Cats dislike the unknown. Don't force people on them; let your cat decide who they like and don't like
- Teasing the Fur Baby - gentle play is one thing, but don't poke or pull.
- **REMEMBER: Respect your cat's dislikes!**

Cats Have 5 Major Personality Types

- Human Cat – they love people. Social butterflies who crave human interaction. They enjoy invading your personal space at all times
- Hunter Cat – cats are born hunters; but some more than others. They often prefer realistic toys to practice their skills. No frills or ribbons on the toys
- Cat's Cat – they find comfort being with other cats, and love to cuddle with other felines
- Cantankerous Cat – get frustrated and annoyed if routine is disturbed. Need their independence and distance when THEY want it
- Inquisitive Cat – always getting into something. Curious, playful and outgoing. Generally intelligent and eager to explore anything new
- **REMEMBER: No matter which personality, all cats need to be loved!**

Why Is Your Cat Not Eating?

- Overfeeding – the cat may be eating more than it needs by free-feeding. Multiple small meals a day is preferable. Follow the guidelines on the bag or can of food, or check with your vet
- Too Many Treats – can ruin a cat’s appetite much like it does a human. According to a vet, treats should never provide more than 5-10% of a cat’s caloric intake
- Picky Behavior – some cats are truly picky eaters. Don’t indulge the behavior; choose a balanced, high-quality diet and stick to it
- Stress – cats are very susceptible to stress and anxiety. The smallest changes to their routine can cause stress and lead them to stop eating
- Dental Pain – if you notice your cat chewing on only one side of the mouth, or swallowing food whole, schedule an appt. with your vet
- Recent Vaccinations – some side effects like soreness, lethargy, or even nausea up to 48 hours after vaccination can cause loss of appetite
- Normal Aging Changes – as cats age, they tend to become less active so they require less calories. Decrease in appetite may be just aging
- **REMEMBER: Be alert for signs your cat isn’t eating normally!**

Important Reasons Why You Should Pet Your Cat More

- Communicate love/allows you to bond to your cat and vice versa
- Reduce stress and anxiety
- Detect fleas and ticks
- Detect new cuts or bumps
- Detect tenderness if cat flinches
- **REMEMBER: Pet only areas your cat likes!**

Reasons To Keep Your Cat Indoors

- Diseases and Parasites – fleas, ticks, or lice, or more serious diseases that can be transmitted from other cats, such as feline leukemia (FeLV), feline AIDS (FIV), or feline distemper
- Dogs, Wildlife, and Other Cats – often larger animals can seriously injure your cat, or cause deadly infections
- Cars – cats don't have any inherent instinct to stay out of the street to avoid being hit
- People – can pick up your pet, and take them to the local shelter, or keep them for themselves. There are also cruel people who will harm or even kill cats
- **REMEMBER: Indoor cats have a longer life span than outdoor cats!**

Scents Your Cat Dislikes

- Citrus
- Filthy litter box
- Banana
- Pine
- Spoiled fish
- Pepper
- Overly scented soap and deodorant
- Eucalyptus
- Essential oils (they can also be toxic to cats)
- Other cats
- **REMEMBER: Cats have a sense of smell 14 times greater than a human's**

Signs Your Cat Truly Loves You

- Brings you “presents”. Cats are natural hunters, so some presents you won’t want to touch! Think of them as tokens of love
- Cats will roll over on their backs and flash their tummy. This shows they feel comfortable, loved, and protected enough to be vulnerable
- Head butting. This is a huge deal, and a special privilege. Shows their possession towards you, leave traces of their scent on you
- Love bites. Nibbling playfully shows affections towards you
- Following/Lingering around wherever you are. Shows fondness for you
- Kneading. Shows you the love they developed as babies when nursing
- Twitching the tips of their tails. A cat’s tail is like a mood sensor with each movement depicting their feelings. Tail up, flipping the tip around you, they think you’re the “cat’s meow”
- The power of the purr. Cats purring usually mean they’re happy. If they purr loudly every time you pay them attention, it means they’ve developed special feelings for you.
- Eye contact with a kitty kiss. If the cat locks eyes with you watch for the slow blink. This is their version of a kiss. Blink back in return
- Leaves traces of their scent on you
- Tail curled around an arm, hand, or leg is a cat’s version of “holding hands”
- **REMEMBER: Your Cat Loves you!**

Weird Reasons Why Your Cat Licks You

- Cleaning you up
- You taste interesting
- Showing affection
- Marking you as part of their territory
- Anxiety
- **REMEMBER: Let them lick you!**

Reasons Why Cats Can See So Well In Dim Light

- Cats have disproportionately large eyes for the size of their heads
- Cats can open the irises of their eyes very wide, allowing them to let in as much light as possible
- In human eyes, 4 out of 5 of the retina's light sensitive cells are rods; in cat's retinas 25 out of 26 are rods!
- Cats have a mirrored layer in the backs of their eyes that reflect. This reflective area gives light a second chance to hit the retina's light rods
- Cat's sensitive whiskers are able to pick up the slightest changes in the environment
- **REMEMBER: Cats can see much better than humans in semi-darkness!**

Reasons Why Cats Suddenly Attack Us

- Natural Instinct – long and ancient lineage of wild hunters in their genes
- Cats Just Want to Have Fun – they love to play, and sometimes it isn't always gentle. They like to use their teeth and claws, but don't mean harm
- Boredom – cats will act out in destructive ways, like sudden attacks
- Frustration with You – cats can become annoyed with our preening and picking. If we don't take the hint from their tail swipes and ear flicks, they will attack as a way of saying "stop it, you"!
- Not Feeling Like Top Cat – they crave their own territory. In order to assert dominance, they will act out aggressively and attack
- The Unattainable Lure of the Great Outdoors – indoor cats love window watching, but the bird in the bush outside makes them irritable that they can't have the bird, so they might attack you in frustration
- Scared Senseless – fear can cause cats to suddenly attack when scare and caught in a situation outside their control
- Illness or Injury – cats that don't feel well can turn to aggression to communicate their vulnerability.
- **REMEMBER: Watch for signs when the cat attacks the Pet Parent!**

If Your Cat Could Talk, This Is What They'd Want You to Know

- “My meow is all for you. Well, mostly.”
- “Be flattered if I show you my belly...but it’s not necessarily an invitation to touch it.”
- “I need to be able to perch above my kingdom.” Cats love vertical space, like cat trees, window perches, as they make them feel safe
- “Scratching is good for me.” It helps cats shed loose layers from her claws, and it gives them a good stretch
- “Most of my senses are a lot stronger than yours and they effect how I make choices.” Thanks to the 200 million odor-sensitive cells in their nostrils!
- **REMEMBER: Cats do talk! Well, in cat tongue!**

Things Your Cat Needs From You The Most

- Respect for their space - there’s time to socialize and a time to be alone
- Fundamental Needs – food, water, grooming, playing
- Protection – it’s up to the pet parent to make sure they stay safe. Microchipping, vaccinations, and pest preventative can all help
- Mental stimulation – hiding, stalking, chasing, and pouncing helps cats keep happily occupied.
- Dedicated one-on-one time – make sure to spend time doing your cat’s favorite thing every day, whether it’s cuddling, playing, or just having a conversation. Give your full attention
- Love and affection – aside from their health and safety, cats need most a connection with you! Love and affection strengthen your bond
- **REMEMBER: “You can take the cat out of the wild, but you can’t take the wild out of the cat!”**

Tips To Stop Cats From Scratching Furniture

- Alternate scratching posts – give different styles – cardboard, carpet, sisal, until you know what they like
- Catnip – great way to attract cats to the allowed scratching areas. Try cat nip spray on areas as well
- Numerous scratchers – variety of scratchers in different locations
- Scents – many cats are deterred by strong odors like cologne, menthol or citrus, and can be used in the areas you don't want marred
- Exercise - a tired kitty is a good kitty
- Clipping nails – trim claws every couple of months
- **REMEMBER: Clawing is innate! Declawing is cruel and inhumane and should never be an option when dealing with a scratching cat.**

Cat Myths To Stop Believing

- Cats have nine lives – from Ancient Egypt, and Celtic folklore. All unproven
- Cats always land on their feet – cats can right themselves when falling, but not always on their feet
- Cats can't be trained like dogs – they do a lot of the same tricks dogs do, only with feline style. They learn through positive reinforcement
- A wagging a tail is a sign of a happy cat – it can also mean they're annoyed
- Milk is good for cats to drink – it is NOT good for cat's digestion, and can lead to serious gastrointestinal issues
- Declawing cats is no big deal – not a viable solution for cat's clawing furniture, etc. Many cats who undergo declawing live the rest of their lives with chronic pain from the "ten" amputations!
- **REMEMBER: Don't believe old myths unless you research them!**

Reasons Cats Poop Outside Their Litter Box

- Litter box too small – choose a litter box one-and-a-half times your cat’s body length
- Too shallow and not filled with enough litter to satisfy the dig-and-bury instinct
- Too difficult to due to pain or physical limitations – make sure to adjust size and location for senior or disabled cats
- Location matters – might be too close to a furnace, too public, too noisy, or too near doors
- Box is too stinky or dirty – change litter per the instructions on the bag; once or twice a day remove waste, and thoroughly clean the litterbox once a week.
- Another pet is guarding the box – make sure the dominant animal is not preventing a timid cat from accessing the box
- Have enough litter boxes – general rule to follow is one litter box for each cat in household, plus an extra one for good measure
- Cat dislikes litter choice – cats tend to prefer finely ground litter granules and have aversions to scented or highly dusty products; once you find a litter they like, stick with it!
- Cat has a health problem – in addition to aging, cat could be experiencing pain or fatigue that makes it difficult to climb inside. If you suspect this, schedule an appointment with your veterinarian
- **REMEMBER: The litter box should be their favorite place to take care of business!**

Tips For Raising A Well-Adjusted Kitten

- Socialize with humans – introduce the kitten to lots of people during the first few months; have them play and cuddle, as it will prepare the kitten for a life of feeling safe and secure when you have visitors and pet sitters
- Socialize with dogs and other animals – always supervise these introductions
- Lots of gentle play – kittens have a lot of energy; engage in frequent play with interactive toys like a laser pointer or wand toy
- Teach the kitten that biting is not appropriate or ok during play
- Give affection – petting, cuddling, sweet talking, picking up, holding, kissing. All of this will help them grow into emotionally healthy and trusting cats
- Create stimulating home environment – include easy access to fresh water, nourishing food, and a clean litter box
- **REMEMBER: Kittens can grow up to be healthy, trusting, and well-adjusted!**

Reasons To Share Your Bed With Your Cat

- They're like fluffy little heaters. No hot water bottle needed.
- They give you peace of mind – they will alert you to any nocturnal sights, smells, or sounds that seem out of the ordinary
- They are a great source of emotional healing – keeps you calm, relaxed and happy, which is a way to drift off into Dreamland
- Cats love to snuggle – well a lot of them do
- The best way to wake up. The sweet whiskered face is the first thing you see in the morning to start your day
- **REMEMBER: More benefits than one to have your cat sleep with you!**

Things To Do If Your Indoor Cat Gets Lost Outside

- Get the word out – the more people who know to look out for your missing cat, the better chances are of finding the cat
- Neighbors – walk around and fill them in on the situation. Ask them to keep an eye out and contact you if they see your runaway
- Flyers – make them with picture of your pet, telephone number, short description of the cat, and post on around the neighborhood
- Social media – they have helped countless pet owners find their fur babies simply by rapidly spreading the message.
- **REMEMBER: If your cat gets lost take the steps to find him or her**

Ideas To Create More Living Spaces For Your Cat

- Nooks – cats love to hide. Save a little bit of shelf on a bookshelf and add a bit of fabric to curtain it off, or a storage cube placed on its side
- Under the bed – this space is quiet and dark – exactly the kind of place cats love! Add a bed skirt, and make a spacious cat cave
- Wall shelves – great for people in small spaces; cats love them
- Window seat – if your cat loves gazing out through the glass, they'll love their own seat. Check stores for the one that fits your cat's needs
- Wall mounted cat tree – space to scratch, climb, and nap
- **REMEMBER: If you live in a small space, your indoor cat can still have places to explore!**