

TIPS FOR CAT ADOPTERS

CONGRATULATIONS!

Your lifesaving decision to adopt a cat means the world to your new feline family member. With just a little preparation, you can help ensure that your new cat's transition from homeless to home will be a smooth and rewarding experience for both of you.

PREPARING FOR YOUR NEW CAT

Your new pet will depend on you for everything, from healthy food to affection, exercise and training. It sounds like a lot, but what could be more rewarding? Here are some things to buy before bringing your cat home:

- Food and water bowls
- Food
- Treats
- Collar with ID tag
- Cat bed
- Cat toys
- Cat litter box
- Cat litter
- Scratching post or strips

If your cat was microchipped by the adoption agency, be sure to add your name, phone number and address to the microchip registration. Even if your cat has a microchip, put a collar and ID tag on your cat as soon as you get home.

WELCOME HOME

While some cats adjust to the move with little effort, others take a while to become familiar and relaxed in their new home. So be patient and give your new cat a few days to settle in. If he prefers to view the world from under the couch until he feels safe to venture out, allow him to have the space and time he needs. It's a good idea to provide plenty of hiding places, up high and at floor level, so he has easy access to a safe spot. When he is in a hiding place, do not disturb him. His hiding places should be his special places, where he can have privacy if desired. This will help him to feel confident more quickly.

HERE ARE SOME TIPS TO HELP YOUR NEW CAT FEEL AT HOME:

- Make sure that he has easy access to fresh food and water, as well as a clean litter box.
- It's a good idea to confine your new cat to one room for a few days, so make sure that's where the essentials are located. A bedroom with a door that can be kept closed is perfect.
- It's also a good idea to provide some toys and a scratching post. Stroke your kitty and then stroke the scratching post so that the post will have your cat's scent on it.
- Other simple toys, such as paper bags (with the handles removed for safety) or cardboard boxes with holes cut in them, provide loads of entertainment and places to hide.
- If you have children, they are probably anticipating the arrival of the new pet. Kids love pets and it is natural for them to want to hold your new cat. However, some cats don't like to be held or might not want to be picked up when they first arrive home.

DIET

Cats eat less when they are stressed, and moving to a new home is stressful, so don't be surprised or concerned if food is ignored at first, especially while you are watching. But if your new cat doesn't eat and drink overnight after everyone else has gone to bed, try mixing a little bit of a tastier food, such as canned cat food or baby food, into his dry food. Cats shouldn't go more than a couple of days without eating, so talk to your veterinarian if your new pet continues to reject food.

It's important for the health of your cat that you feed him a high-quality food (which doesn't have to be expensive, by the way). Check with a pet-supply store or with the adoption organization for suggestions. If you want to change your new cat's food, wait a couple of days and then gradually introduce the preferred food by mixing it with the food the cat is familiar with, feeding more of the new food and less of the old each meal until the change is made. Changing your cat's diet too rapidly can cause upset to his system, such as decreased appetite, vomiting and diarrhea. If this happens, call your veterinarian or the adoption organization.

You can feed your cat once or twice a day, or you can leave food out all day (called "free feeding"). Be aware, though, that many cats who are free-fed do not properly control their food intake and may become overweight, which predisposes them to health problems. You might want to have dry food available all day and then open a can of wet food when you get home so that your cat gives you an extra-special welcome when you walk through the door. For most cats, feeding twice a day is ideal.

Also, please provide clean, fresh water for your cat. Change the water in the bowl every day and clean the bowl regularly. Cats need to drink plenty of water, especially if they eat dry food only, but they don't like to drink dirty water (who does?) and can easily become dehydrated if they don't find the water palatable.

LITTER BOX

Get a new litter box for your cat, preferably one that's uncovered. Covered litter boxes can trap odors inside the box, which is nice for you, but not for your cat. Cats are usually quite fastidious; they are sensitive to the smell of urine and feces, as well as deodorizers. Buy the same kind of litter that the cat is accustomed to using.

Be sure to scoop out the box every day and clean it completely as often as needed, but at least once every two weeks. When you clean the litter box, use a mild soap, not strong-smelling detergents or ammonia. Remember, if you don't like the smell of the litter box, your cat probably doesn't either. Keep it clean and you'll have a happy cat.

INDOORS VS. OUTDOORS

Cats who are kept indoors tend to live longer, healthier lives, so we strongly recommend that cats not be allowed outdoors. However, if you plan to allow your cat to spend time outside, here are a few things to keep in mind:

- Don't allow your new cat to go outdoors for at least seven to ten days, or until you are certain that she is happy and adjusted to living in your home.
- Give her easy access to your home through a cat door or open window.
- Dogs, traffic and predatory wildlife, such as large birds of prey and coyotes, can all cause harm to your cat, so don't let her roam in places where these hazards exist.

If you have any questions about the best way to care for your new cat, call the rescue group or shelter from which you adopted him or her, or you can call or email one of the NKLA partner organizations that work with cats. You can also visit the [Resources](#) section of the Best Friends website.

Thank you so much for adopting your new best friend. Together, we can Save Them All®.