



Cat Prep Kit for our “Kittens” section

5) Kittens

We will only discuss the differences when bringing a kitten home vs. a more mature cat.....all the other steps will be the same.

Bringing new kitten home



Kittens leave their mother and siblings after about 8 to 10 weeks of age. Kittens have special needs similar to human babies. When you are ready to bring your new cuddly fur-ball home, make sure you have one or two days to be with them and help them adjust to their new home.

You definitely want to have a cat carrier when you are ready to pick up your kitten. See if the shelter has a towel from it's cage to put in the carrier. The familiar smells will help to reduce the stress of the trip. If not, bring a towel to put in the carrier.

The kitten has just left their mom not too long ago and the carrier will give them a sense of security. In addition, you will use the carrier for a few days in the solo room set-up to ease them into their new home. We covered this step in S3.

Safety

With kittens, eliminate electrical cords and cords from blinds. Make sure there are no rubber bands lying around. Also, make sure toys do not have any parts that your kitten can pull off and swallow.

Remove plants that are known to be poisonous to cats, which can include some varieties of succulents. Eliminate any roach / ant traps and always keep the toilet lid down. Kittens do not have the same experience as more mature cats regarding things that can hurt them.

Cat Carrier (additional info from section 1)

When traveling home from shelter with a kitten or kittens using the cat carrier is for the safety of the kitten(s) and you. It is helpful to take a towel or blanket the kitten has been sleeping on with you to his new home. Contact the shelter or breeder before you pick up your new pussycat and see if you can drop off a towel for them to sleep on before you pick them up. The shelter may also just give you a towel they have been sleeping on. Put the towel in the carrier for the ride home, and leave it in the carrier for your new pet to sleep on the first few days.

Kitten Nutrition



Understand that the nutritional needs of your kitten are very important compared to a mature cat. They require 2 to 3 times more calories and nutrients as mature felines. Do not give your kitten cow's milk.

Around 6 to 7 weeks, your kitten usually will be able to eat dry kitten food. You will want to feed them a quality branded kitten food with the (AAFCO) seal on the bag. This seal says that this kitten food contains the proper nutrition for a kitten.

Feed your kitten 3 times a day until they are 6 months old and then start feeding them twice a day.

Litter Box



Make sure the sides of the litter box are not too tall and they can get in and out with ease. Cats instinctively cover up their waste. However, for a kitten you may need to help them a little. Place them in the clean litter box and see if they start to dig. If not, take a paw and gently start to dig in the litter.

Praise your kitten when they use the litter box and never punish them if they do not. Just put them into the box every hour until they get the hang of it.

Scratching



Start the scratching / clawing training immediately by placing a cat tree or scratching post in their area. See "Scratching post, pads and cat trees" above for more information.

Handling your kitten



Everybody wants to hold a kitten but we recommend that you limit handling for the first 3 days while kitty adjusts.

Kids under 5 years of age should not interact with a kitten. If you have young kids, adopt a more mature cat. A lot of shelters / cat rescue organizations will not adopt kittens out to families with young children. Young children can be way to rough on a kitten that can sometimes lead to a tragic ending.

Teach older children how to hold a cat. The normal method would be one hand behind the front legs and the other supporting the backside. Teach them to never to grab a kitten by the tail or ears or pick them up by the scruff of their neck. Teach them how to softly pet the kittens head and back area.

Vet

As with mature shelter cats, kittens need to see a vet immediately if the shelter does not have a vet on staff.

If the shelter does not offer a spaying or neutering, your kitten can have the procedure as early as eight weeks of age. Your vet can better determine the timing of this procedure.

Leaving kitten alone

If you will be gone all day, add a nightlight to their area. Also, give them safe toys and place a radio outside their door tuned to country western or classical music. Some experts have determined cats prefer these two genres of music.

6) Read one book on Cats

If you really want to have a better experience with you furry friends, read one cat book. You will be surprised at how it will affect your personal experience with your cats or kittens forever.

Books by Cat Behavior Expert Pam Johnson-Bennett are exceptional and recommended. Click on the image below to check out her books.

Pam's books are referred to as the cat bibles



by behavior experts, veterinarians and cat parents worldwide