

Animal Care Tips: Cats



Congratulations on adopting your new feline friend!
Our goal at Tails to Tell Animal Rescue Shelter is to find the perfect match between families and their pets.

Welcome Home Kitty

Cats adapt best with habit, routine, and love. Bringing your new cat home will be an adjustment for him or her. Keep in mind; many of our rescued champions have spent most of their lives in our shelter. Here are some helpful hints to make their transition as comfortable as possible with the gift of patience and time for a happy and lifelong relationship with your new pet.

Start Small

Create a small space for your cat, a spare bathroom, or a spare room, preferably with a window is ideal. Place cat bed, food and water dishes, toys, and litter box in the room. This way your new family member only must adjust to a small change at first and has a familiar and safe place to retreat to when the time comes to venture into the rest of the house.

Start Slow

Let your cat stay in their safe place for a few days at minimum before he or she begins exploring the rest of the home. This gives the opportunity to get used to the smells and sounds of their new home, meeting any other pets - they can smell each other under the door. Keep in mind; that some cats may need longer, and the grace period varies. Visit your cat frequently during the day and evening. Be patient if your cat is distant or not cuddly. Distancing is a common reaction as they are adapting to a new change in their life, and this can be a stressful situation for your cat.

Start Right

The success of any happy pet relationship is often defined by the first steps we take. While there are many people that brag about tossing the cats in together and they work it out, this is not in the best interest for your current animal residents, nor the newest cat. Cats do not like change and are not quickly receptive to new-comers or new situations. It's only when the fur is flying that owners realize the obstacle they are now facing and begin damage control and, in some cases, it cannot be undone. Keep hope though, you can start fresh with the previous two steps and try, try again.

Introducing Other Pets

Please talk to a Tails to Tell expert about your current animals before adopting. We are knowledgeable about our animals and their backgrounds. We are committed to making sure you and your adoption are the perfect fit. Here are some helpful tips to introducing your new pet(s) to your current pet(s).

- **To another cat:** Follow the "Welcome Home Kitty" tips mentioned above and let them sniff each other under the door. Play with both cats by the door with strings or dangly toys so they can interact in a fun manner without direct contact. We want your current cat(s) introduction to be a comfortable, slow, and gradual one. When the new kitty is comfortable, let him or her explore the rest of the house with you close by. Prevent any aggressive behavior by keeping close to both cats and watching their body language towards each other. Supervising all interactions will give your current resident animal(s) and your new cat feelings of comfort and ease in these early days. Patience is key. Every cat's journey is different; some cats may foster feelings of love for each other, and others may tolerate each other but not become close.
- **To a dog:** Follow the "Welcome Home Kitty" tips and let them sniff each other under the door. When the kitty is comfortable enough to explore the rest of the house, keep the dog under strict control, using a leash or muzzle, if needed. A long tiring walk, or a game of fetch prior to the meeting may help keep the dog's energy at a minimum. If your dog is overly curious about the new cat, bring out the kitty's bed to sniff. Praise the dog to excess if he lies down or ignores the new kitty. Do not try to force them to directly interact. The key to success is a calm, relaxed and under control dog. Kitty will interact when ready and patience is a must.



Care & Common Issues

Taking care of your pet's health and happiness will ensure a happy kitty with few behavior problems.

- Keep the litter box a distance away from the food and water dishes. Cats will not eat in the same areas where they do their business in litter boxes.
- Keep the litter box clean to prevent house soiling issues and urinary tract infections. **It should be scooped at least once or twice a day.**
- Groom regularly to prevent matting and hairballs.
- Yearly vet checks and updated vaccines can help prevent serious illness and disorders.
- Provide acceptable toys and towers for cats to scratch on, trim nails or use "Soft Paws" to prevent your cat from scratching furniture.
- Don't leave out tempting treats and food on your table or counters. Many of our residents have never lived in a house and have survived prior to their rescue on whatever they found on the streets. They have no idea that counters and tables are off limits until they are taught.
- Keep cat food away from dogs. Eating cat feces is also a common behavior in dogs and while not proven toxic, it is best to keep the litter box away from dogs in your household. This will also give your new kitty a sense of comfort that a part of their safe space is not being "invaded".
- If adopting a kitten, keep all small openings such as floor vents secured tightly to the floor. We want to ensure your kitty is safe and does not fall down the floor vents.
- If you have a large breed dog, please keep them separated from your kitten as they are small and are in danger of being injured. If your dog is energetic or predatory, injuries to cats can be fatal.
- Most importantly, ask for help. Sometimes transitions amongst pets do not go smoothly. Prevention of severe injury and prolonged fights can be harder to resolve. Call your Tails to Tell representative and ask for help. Most often conflicts between pets in the same family can be resolved with professional help. Punishment won't work; it can make things worse and contribute to more aggressive behavior.

Note: We hope that these tips will assist in a successful introduction, and a happy, trusting relationship with your new pet. For more tips, especially on our shy cats, please ask one of our Tails to Tell volunteers for recommendations and advice.

CHECKLIST

- ❖ Food - Kibble and Canned
- ❖ Food and Water bowls
- ❖ Litter box and scoop
- ❖ Kitty Litter
- ❖ Cat bed
- ❖ Nail Clippers
- ❖ Brush or comb
- ❖ Collar with ID tag with your phone number
- ❖ Enzymatic cleaner
- ❖ Carrier
- ❖ Variety of Toys
- ❖ Scratch Post
- ❖ Cat tree by a window

