



CAT BASICS



Water

Water is very important to cats, and they often do not drink enough on their own. A fountain with fresh, moving water can help encourage drinking. Some cats may be spooked by the running water, so check to make sure they are still drinking from a new fountain. You may want to continue offering a bowl of fresh still water daily. Another good way to keep your kitty hydrated is by adding a little extra water to your cat's wet food portions.



Feeding

Cats require a well-balanced diet which is specifically formulated for cats. We recommend feeding canned food twice daily and providing dry food by free-feeding, meal-feeding or using puzzle feeders, depending on the health and activity level of your cat. Providing smaller meals throughout the day prevents your cat from eating too much at a given time and helps them maintain a healthy weight. Limit how much human food you give to your cat, and make yourself aware of foods that are toxic to cats, such as chocolate or grapes.

Carriers

We recommend purchasing a top-loading carrier, which will make it easier to get your furry friend to the vet. Rather than trying to scoot them in the front door, you can gently place them in through the top instead. In order to build a good association with the carrier, try putting some treats in the carrier before you load up your friend so that there is something good waiting for them. We also recommend leaving the carrier in plain sight once you bring your kitty home so that they can get used to seeing it daily.



Health

One of the best things you can do to support the health of your cat is keeping up with annual vet visits. Even if your cat is young and seems to be in good health, having a vet take a good look can help detect illnesses early so you can treat them before they progress. It's also important to stay up to date on vaccines such as rabies and FVRCP, which help protect against some of the most deadly illnesses in cats.

Cats can be very good at hiding when they don't feel well, but some tell-tale signs include sudden changes in behavior, vocalization, urinating/defecating outside of the litter box, straining or unable to urinate/defecate, vomiting, lack of appetite, and lethargy. If you notice any of these signs, take your cat to the vet immediately, as they could be signs of a life-threatening illness.

Grooming

Healthy cats are normally very good at grooming themselves, and don't require human intervention.

However, long-haired cats are often prone to matting and require more frequent brushings.

When your cat gets older, they may also have more trouble cleaning themselves, so it's good to get them used to being brushed. Additionally, most cats will need to have their nails trimmed regularly, usually about once a month. Pet nail clippers can be purchased online or at any pet store. If it's your first time cutting a cat's nails, ask our adoption counselors to show you how to do it properly to avoid accidentally injuring your cat. Try using rewards such as treats or squeeze ups during nail trimming or brushing to help distract your kitty and create positive associations.

Enrichment

Enrichment helps keep your kitty's mind and body happy and healthy, as well as makes them feel like your home is their home too! Here are some fun ways to keep them entertained:



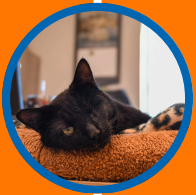
Puzzle feeders are a great way to engage your cat's natural hunting instinct while slowing down their eating and helping them maintain a healthy weight!



Cat trees provide your cat with vertical space, allowing them to jump and play. Many cats also enjoy window perches so that they can watch the outside world.



Toys such as jingly balls, fabric mice, and motorized toys can give your cat hours of self-sustained fun. Wand toys and laser pointers are also fan favorites which provide important opportunities for interactive play!



Bedding: Everyone needs a comfy place to sleep! You can try different types of beds, such as teepee beds, traditional round fluffy beds, and little cubbies, to see what your cat prefers.



Scratching posts give cats a way to exercise their claws somewhere other than on your furniture! Try both vertical and horizontal scratchers to see what your kitty likes best.



Catnip and **silvervine** are both very attracting to cats. Try stuffing some into a toy or sprinkling it on a blanket or scratching post. *Note:* some cats may not react to catnip.

Litterboxes

Cats generally prefer uncovered litter boxes that are at least 1.5 times the length of their body, from their nose to the base of their tail.

While many people think a covered litter box is the way to go for privacy, this can actually make cats feel as though they cannot see their surroundings well enough to protect themselves. Cats also like litter that is fine and sandy, such as clay litter. We recommend an unscented litter, as the scent could be overpowering to your kitty's nose.

Currently, we use non-clumping clay litter, so it would be recommended to start with a litter that is clay based. If you want to try a different litter, try adding an additional box with the new litter and see if your kitty uses it more or at least as much as the current litter. If so, you can slowly transition by adding more of the new litter and less of the old over the course of a week or two.

It's recommended to keep your litter box far away from your cat's food and water dishes. You should have at least one litter box per cat, plus one extra for multi-cat households, spread out in each cat's preferred areas. Additionally, you will want to have at least one litter box on each floor of your house to make it easy for your kitty to get to the litter box. Litter boxes should be scooped at least once daily, and thoroughly cleaned at least once a month. Just like humans, cats want to go to the bathroom in a clean place!