

WHAT DO I NEED FOR MY CAT or KITTEN?

Check out the Jackson Galaxy video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KHmrh6eQ6EQ> Everything you need for your cat



So you've decided to adopt a cat. Here's a list of the things you need

Cat carrier - Your cat must always be transported in a secure carrier which you hold in your arms, not by the handle. The carrier needs to be sturdy & easy to clean with a removable door and top. When not in use this carrier can become the cat's cosy, hiding place if they are anxious or frightened. When you get into the cat's Safe Room remove the carrier door or wedge it open and place it away from the door to the room. Then leave the room. Later you can put a cosy blanket inside the carrier. If you give your cat a couple of treats when it is in the carrier they will feel it's a good, safe place to be & as an added bonus when it's time to go to the vet, it will be easy to get them into it!

Litter tray & litter scoop – Every cat needs a litter tray and it's recommended that one cat should have TWO litter trays in different places. They're not the most attractive things but you need to face up to the fact that your cat needs a litter tray in a place where they are comfortable using it and this might not be the place you would prefer it to be. When you consider that if the cat is not happy with its position they will toilet elsewhere this might put it into perspective.



Kittens need shallow sided trays until they can climb into a bigger litter tray. There are many different types of litter trays but a large one or a deep sided plastic box big enough for them to dig and turn around in is best. Put the litter tray in a quiet place away from the feeding area. If you want your cat to use a tray with a cover you will need to introduce it to them gradually. Meanwhile keep their normal tray set up as well as the base of the hooded one until the cat gets used to it. Then you can add the hood. Be warned though - your cat might be scared of it at first and they may never come to like it. If you choose to use tray liners and your cat gets their claws stuck in the plastic they may then avoid the tray so see how it goes and stop using them if necessary. Ideally as soon as your cat toilets the tray should be scooped, but otherwise it should be scooped at least once a day, the litter topped up if needed)and completely cleaned with hot water & detergent every 2-3 weeks (don't use bleach) Some owners train their cats to use the toilet – search for videos on youtube if you're up for it!

Litter - there are several types of cat litter to suit every pocket and human preference but cats also have preferences. Ideally, at least in the beginning, try to continue using the same litter the cat is used to, and if you decide to change, do it gradually by mixing old and new types of litter together. In general natural, unscented litter is best. If the litter is very dusty or contains silica dust it may be unhealthy for your cat so we suggest you do your own research. Don't use clumping litter for kittens as they may eat it.



Optional: When cats dig, litter can stick to their paws or spill out of the box. Putting a sturdy easy to clean mat under the tray can make cleaning easier.

Bowl(s) for food and water - If you feed both wet and dry food you may want to use separate bowls. Plastic bowls can give cats chin acne and ceramic, stainless steel, glass or pyrex bowls are best. You may want to put the bowls on a waterproof mat especially if your cat loves playing with water and you could provide a battery operated or electric water fountain which many cats enjoy drinking from. It's also a good idea, especially if the cat is being left alone, to put their dry food portion in a puzzle feeder or small Kong so that they have to work to get it. This will provide them with stimulation when you are away (and if necessary slow down how they eat).



Hiding places - If cats are left to choose their own hiding places they will find the most inaccessible, out of the way, dark spots where you can't see them. So before you put them in their Safe Room block off any of these potential places and provide hiding places you can control, where you can still see the cat and it will be easier to entice them out to play or eat. Some scratching posts have hidey-holes they can use & the carrier can act as hiding place. You can also make your own hiding places out of cardboard boxes or buy igloo beds or clam beds which they can crawl right inside.



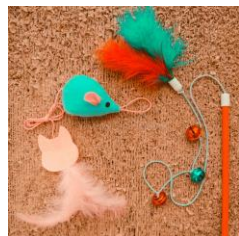
Should I get my cat a bed?

Some cats prefer to sleep on the lounge or your bed rather than a fancy, expensive cat bed so it's a good idea before you spend lots of money to notice where and how your cat likes to sleep. As a test you could buy a cheap cat bed or try cutting down the sides of a cardboard box & making it cosy with a soft blanket or towel. If they use it they might like a bed. If they don't, they probably won't and you will have saved some money.

A scratching post encourages your cat to stretch, climb, exercise & scratch, which keeps their claws healthy. The ideal post will be sturdy with a wide base and different levels, and platforms wide enough for your cat to sit & lie on and it will be tall enough for stretching and climbing. Many cats enjoy being up high especially if the scratching post is next to a window. Some scratching posts can be wedged between the ceiling and the floor. Scratching posts can be quite stylish and some of them blend in with the furniture but they can be expensive so it's wise look around before buying.



Toys help your cat to use their energy & exercise physically and mentally. If your cat is bored this can result in undesirable behaviours so they need to have toys they can play with on their own as well as toys for you to interact with them. It's best not to use your hands/fingers to play with a cat as they may accidentally catch you with their claws. Cats do have toy preferences so try different types to see which they like best. Interactive toys include 'wand-type'/pole toys which encourage them to chase and catch whilst your hands are out of the way. Soft toys are easy for them to scent mark and wrestle with and some cats like playing in cat tunnels. Other toys such as pom-poms, ping-pong balls, screwed up paper etc are great for playing on their own. You don't have to buy expensive toys as you can easily make your own – just search online for examples. Playing with your cat helps them to bond with you. Ideally you will play with them for short periods several times a day but especially before bed time so that they use up any excess energy and will go to sleep. Keep the interactive toys in a box when you're not playing with them and rotate the other toys that you leave with your cat.



Grooming Cats usually enjoy being stroked and this, together with an occasional soft brush, is often enough to keep short haired cats healthy and happy. However if you have a medium or long haired cat you will need to brush them regularly. If your cat isn't used to being brushed, start with short sessions brushing on the top of the head and cheeks and working slowly to other parts of the body over a period of time. Try different brushes/combs to see which your cat prefers.



Cutting your cat's claws

If you are going to do this you will need to gradually get the cat used to you touching and stroking their legs and paws when they are very relaxed. You will need special pet clippers but **before attempting to cut their claws it's really important that you read about the structure of their claws as they can bleed if you cut in the wrong place.** If you are at all nervous it's best to pop into your vet and ask for a nurse to cut their claws.

Should I get pet insurance?

Pet insurance can provide cover for future vet fees and is a matter of personal circumstance and choice. You need to do your own research online, and ask around before deciding if it's suitable for you.

Depending on your situation the following Cat Care Guides on our website may be useful

www.safeanimalrehomeing.com.au/other-services/education-library/