



Keeping Kitty Happy

*Planning and preparing
for your new kitten's
arrival*

The arrival of a kitten should be planned rather than a spontaneous acquisition because a kitten should be considered a long term commitment. A certain amount of preparation is required before collecting your cat. I am now going to talk about getting your kitten, but the same goes for if you are getting a fully grown cat.

Here are some ideas to get you started in the right direction.

Consider where your cat will sleep, eat and do its ablutions. What will it sleep in or on, its toys, correct feeding and of course your kitty's toilet facilities.

Sleeping Area

A vast array of beautiful kitty beds is available from your local pet shops. Your cat will probably curl up in an old shoe box, bulging out on all sides, but will be peacefully and blissfully asleep while your expensive state of the art cat bed is temporarily ignored. But I'm sure your kitten will appreciate the gesture never the less. When all is said and done, daytime cat naps are taken in the most unusual and sometimes inconvenient places. Night time sleep is preferably in the bed with the humans taking up the width of the bed or pinning their humans down, rather than neatly curling up in a small heap near the foot of the bed. However, a cat likes to have a really comfy bed of his own.

Ablutions

Lets consider the toilet facilities. Here again one has a choice of seriously modern shapes and sizes. The hooded loos are great as they have a cat flap and some of the smell is absorbed by the filter in the hood. Well that's the claim anyway. The trouble is, the cats are attracted to the smell of the carbon filter and constantly dig the filter out of the lid. Messy bits of black carbon like stuff is then shredded and strewn all around the house. A litter box without the hood is even worse. For some reason the cat will spend hours digging the perfect hole. Having spent too much time digging, nature is calling so urgently that there is no more remaining time to neatly park on said hole. Instead the tail hangs over the side and, as there has been no time to get into a comfortable squatting position, a stream squirts out and over the side of the loo. A very confused cat, upon completion of it's bodily functions, carefully covers up it's business where it should be and not where it's landed. So here again a hooded litter box is the answer. Messy bits of carbon being trivial compared with the mopping up needed with the other kind, so it's an idea to remove the filters to start with. Other shapes and designs are available but are too many to mention. I recommend the rectangular hooded

Kittens often enjoy having their own cat bed



Photo by Karen Beyers

Cats need a good litter tray to do their ablutions



Photo by Sarah Thexton

variety, or else a deep plastic container where the bums can't hang over and the spraying stays inboard.

When it comes to litter we are spoilt for choice. If there are only one or two cats in the house, the silicon crystal litter is expensive, but excellent. The solids dry out and are easy to remove the wet is absorbed and all that is necessary is a stir and it's ready for another day. The white crystals become yellow and look a bit less pristine than it started out as, but once again, in a hooded box it's not seen. Clay litters are absorbent, probably the most widely used and priced fairly reasonably. Biodegradable litters made from corn cobs, old news papers, wood shavings etc are available. Once again, take your pick.

Written by
Lucy Arends- Wagner

Shampoos and grooming tools; a variety of cat beds; and various types of litter trays

The arrival of a kitten should be planned because it is a long term commitment.



Photos courtesy Joyce Hopkin

Playthings

What about toys? Well, here one can have a ball... no pun intended. There are the most beautiful and creative toys on the market – furry mice that squeak, things that rattle, things that tinkle and things that go bump in the night. If you come home with a vast array of toys your kitty will be amused for a while, but let it find a plastic milk top or a crumpled piece of paper and it'll keep itself amused for hours. A jungle gym scratch post is a “must-have” toy! This wonder comes in all sorts of shapes and sizes, provides endless amusement for your cat and saves your furniture from sharp little claws. Another favourite is a simple cardboard box, with holes cut into it, which provides hours of fun.

Grooming

You'll need a brush to groom kitty. The type of brush will depend on whether you have a long or short haired cat – ask your pet shop for advise. Nail clippers are needed to give your kitty a manicure and a tooth brush with tasty flavoured tooth paste keeps teeth white and gums healthy. If you want to bath your cat, get a good shampoo for your kitty and, unless you are an experienced cat bather, get band aids and disinfectant for yourself.

Food

If you have bought a cat from a breeder, you should get a diet sheet and instructions on what it has been eating because it is best to continue

There are so many wonderful toys that keep kittens amused for hours!



Photo by Karen Beyers

with the food it has been used to. There are a variety of dried and wet foods on the market. The best foods and good advice are available from your vet. Fresh water must always be available and a real treat is a water fountain that keeps the water circulating and fresh.

Don't forget to buy the food bowls. There are some really beautiful ceramic cat dishes available but they tend to break. Plastic bowls come in a variety of colours and don't break but they need to be sterilized every now and then. Stainless steel bowls don't break, just dent.

Cat Carrier

Finally the moment has arrived and you are off to collect the newest member of the family. Are you prepared at last? If you haven't got a cat carrier you are not prepared!!

Don't try driving unless your kitten is safely contained in a cat proof travelling container. Kittens have a habit of getting into tight places like under a pedal which could cause a disaster! If left to roam your car, a nervous kitten will certainly voice it's opinion about being stuck in a car, not only audibly, but also with a few sharp claws strategically placed into tender bits of human flesh. Your carrier will be needed for trips to the vet when it goes for its annual booster vaccinations, general health check ups and of course regular deworming.

It is important to have a cat carrier for trips to the vet.



Photo by Carol Robinson

Once you get your kitten home, have a bit of consideration for a baby in a strange new environment. It has just left its mother and siblings and will not like to be left alone. It needs love and encouragement to help it settle into its new home.

Catbox hyper ad