

Before You Adopt

Thinking of adopting a cat? Check out these helpful tips, gathered by five well-respected animal organizations: the American Humane Association, the American Veterinary Medical Association, the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA), CATalyst Council, and Petfinder.

If you're thinking about adopting a cat, consider taking home two. Cats require exercise, mental stimulation, and social interaction. Two cats can do this for each other. Plus they'll provide more benefits to you. Cats' purring has been shown to soothe humans as well as themselves – and they have an uncanny ability to make you smile. Find a cat whose personality meshes with yours. Just as we each have our own personality, so do cats. Kittens are usually full of energy and curiosity and are very active. Older cats are often more mellow and laid back, many times being an excellent choice for someone who would prefer to not keep up with an active youngster! Some cats love attention and will sit on your lap purring and head-butting, while others prefer to sit beside you and enjoy your presence. Our team can offer advice to help you match the cat's personality with your own.

Pick out a veterinarian ahead of time and schedule a visit within the first few days following the adoption. You'll want to take any medical records you received from the adoption center on your first visit. To help your new feline friend have a long, healthy life, regular vet checkups are essential.

Make sure everyone in the house is prepared to have a cat before it comes home. Visiting us should be a family affair. When adopting a new cat with existing pets at home, discuss with us how to make a proper introduction. Think carefully about the needs of all family members before adopting. Like any pet, cats are a long-term commitment. Most cats adopted as kittens can be expected to live until they are 15-20 years old.

Supplies you will need before the cat arrives. Be prepared so your new cat can start feeling at home right away. Your cat will need:

- a litter box, cat litter, and a litter scoop
- food and water bowls (avoid plastic if possible)
- good quality food
- scratching posts (preferably at 3 feet high) and other scratching surfaces
- a secure carrier for safe transporting
- safe and stimulating toys
- a cushy bed
- a brush for grooming
- nail clippers

To help your cat make a smoother transition, find out what food was provided at the shelter or foster home so you can gradually transition them to a new food if you choose. The same goes for their litter and scratching surfaces as many cats have distinct preferences.

Budget for the short, and long-term, costs of a cat. Understand any pet is a responsibility and there's a cost associated with that. A cat adopted from a shelter is a bargain. Sheltering Hands has already provided spaying or neutering, initial vaccines, and a microchip for permanent identification. Besides those things though you will need to provide regular vet checkups with required and recommended vaccinations, and a yearly county license tag. Our Adoption Team is happy to help you create your "cat care" budget.

Cat-proof your home. A new cat will quickly teach you not to leave things lying out! Food left on the kitchen counter is a temptation to a free lunch and it might be upsetting to the kitty's stomach. Get rid of items your cat might chew on, watch to ensure the kitten isn't chewing on electric cords and pick up random items like paper clips that kittens may swallow. [Click here](#) for a list of plants that are toxic to cats so your cat does not come into contact with them if you have them as houseplants. Put away harsh cleaning products, human medications, and household poisons, and rehome any houseplants that might be toxic to your new furry family member.

Make sure foods that aren't healthy for a cat's tummy are placed securely out of reach. [Click here](#) for a list of foods that your cat should not eat. If you are adopting a young kitten, plan on securing breakable items until your kitty is calmer and less curious.