



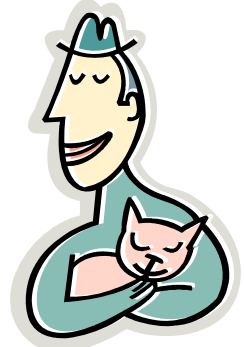
Things to Consider Before Adopting a Kitten

Congratulations on taking the first step toward adopting a cat. As you search the shelter for your feline friend, it will be easy to fall in love with one of the many cute and playful kittens and to assume it will grow into the adult cat you have always wanted. But did you know kittens are not right for everyone? With a lifespan of 15 to 20 years, and sometimes longer, your adventure with your kitten will be brief, but the cat he grows into will be a member of your family for a very long time. Before adopting a kitten, be sure you take the following points into consideration.

The kitten you adopt may not grow into the cat you want.

If a certain personality trait such as outgoing, affectionate, or lap cat, is at the top of your list of wants for a cat, a kitten may not be the best choice for you.

- Sometimes the most affectionate kittens can grow up to be shy, independent or aloof, despite the best care after adoption.
- A cat's personality development begins to take shape in the first few weeks of its life. Its future relationship to humans can be formed by numerous factors: its mother's own feelings toward people, how much it is handled prior to eight weeks, or its hereditary disposition to shyness and independence.
- ***An adult cat's personality has stabilized. By adopting an adult, you can select one that has the temperament you are looking for and you can be more confident that his temperament will remain for years to come.***



Are you looking for a specific breed, color or size?

The shelter sees cats of every color, breed and size. If you are looking for a specific physical characteristic in a cat, an adult cat may be your best bet.



- Siamese, Himalayans, Maine Coons, Persians, and other breeds are generally purchased as kittens through breeders and are surrendered as adults to the shelter. Purebred cats as young as a year are sometimes given up to the shelter with no issues other than that their owner could no longer care for them.
- While we do not recommend ever declawing a cat, we understand there are people who for various reasons prefer cats without claws. For these people, we strongly recommend one of the many already declawed cats that arrive at the shelter each day.
- If size is a consideration, a full-grown cat may be the way to go. Unless the exact breed is known, it is difficult to judge how big a kitten will become.
- Because kittens are generally only available in the spring and summer months, there is a greater demand for them. This may make it difficult to find the kitten you want in the color you desire.
- ***Adult cats of all different sizes, breeds, colors, and hair-types are available all year long.***

Myths associated with adopting an adult cat.

- Adopters often assume that adult cats at the shelter were given up because of issues with the cat, such as litter box problems. Actually, the vast majority are given up for reasons that have nothing to do with the cat itself. ***Common reasons for surrendering a cat to the shelter include:*** a new baby, moving, the time and cost of caring for the animal, or allergies. Other cats at the shelter were either abandoned or otherwise displaced from their owners.
- Another common assumption is that cats that have been outdoors will not adjust to being indoor cats. ***Previously outdoor cats can do very well indoors, where they are safe from cars, the elements, disease, and other animals, and where their lifespan can double.***
- There is no need to fear that an adult cat will not bond as well with their owners as a kitten might. On the contrary, ***adult cats with a longer attention span will likely be more interested in their human friends*** than a kitten who will be considerably more focused on playing and exploring the new world around them.

If you have never owned a cat before, an adult cat can make the adventure easier for you both.

Kittens require a lot of time, energy and attention.

Do you have the time and energy for kitten ownership?

- The energy level of a kitten is boundless. They are always in the mood to play. They do not sleep through the night and can take a long time to settle into a routine.
- Kittens dislike being alone. We often recommend adopting kittens in pairs, particularly if you leave for long periods of time, such as to go to work. A playmate with a similar energy level will keep the kitten entertained while you are away, and can help with the boredom that leads kittens into trouble.
- To avoid injury, kittens need to be watched carefully and your house will need to be kitten-proofed. Likewise, possessions such as knickknacks, curtains, and furniture should be protected as they can be destroyed by a boisterous and curious kitten at play.
- During their first six months of life, kittens require multiple vet visits for a series of vaccinations as well as spaying or neutering.
- If only kittens came to us perfectly mannered! The time you spend with a kitten is important for socialization and development. It will be your job to train the kitten to use the scratching post, to not jump on counters or the dining room table, and to instruct them on proper play habits so they do not end up as biting or scratching adults.
- ***An adult cat enjoys playtime, too, but is also content curling up on your lap, sitting beside you, or looking out the window. By their adult years, they know what is off limits and are less likely to get into trouble. They can be left unsupervised. Some adult cats at the shelter are fully vetted and only require a wellness vet visit.***



Have you considered if a kitten is right for every member of your family?

Kittens don't always mix with children or seniors. For the child's well-being and the cat's, we generally do not recommend a kitten for families with children under the age of six.

- Kittens with sharp teeth and claws may inadvertently injure a small child. Their claws can also pierce the delicate skin of an older person and cause infection.
- Children often want to hug cats or grasp them too tightly. In addition to possible injury to the kitten, these actions may be viewed as threatening and may cause the kitten to become withdrawn, skittish, or fearful of the child.
- Kittens' play can be erratic and sometimes rough, causing children to develop a fear of the family cat.
- Kittens tend to get underfoot, which can be risky around an elderly person who could lose their balance. The kitten could also be injured by a cane or walker.
- ***Adult cats may be more tolerant of children, their energy level is more even-keeled, they generally move more slowly. It is even possible to select a cat that has already lived with children. Mature, less rambunctious cats are also ideal for a less active home.***

Make sure your new pet and existing pets get off on the right foot.

- Dogs may play too roughly with kittens or mistake them for prey. Adult cats are better able to defend themselves and establish boundaries.
- Resident adult cats often become bothered by the playfulness of a kitten, causing the relationship to get off to a bumpy start from which they may never fully recover.
- ***Existing cats often accept another cat better if it is similar in age. It is possible to adopt a cat that has lived with other cats or dogs.***

Give an adult cat a second chance at life.

Don't underestimate the rewards you will get from adopting a harder to place, adult cat.

Remember, all cats started out as kittens.

