

# Cat Adoption Checklist

Cats are cuddly, fun, and adorable – who wouldn't want one? If you're considering adopting a cat or have already added one to the family, you're probably very excited to begin this new chapter of your life with your furry friend. You'll have a companion to curl up on the couch and hours of entertainment during playtime with your favorite feline.

However, adopting a cat can also be stressful. A new cat requires a lot of care and planning. You'll need to ensure that you have everything you need for your cat, plan for their first vet visit, and cat-proof your home. To help you with this endeavor, we've put together this handy checklist so you won't forget a thing.



## STOCK UP ON CAT SUPPLIES

Here's what you'll need to provide a healthy, enriching environment for your new cat, including everything from litter box essentials to fun toys and products to satisfy your cat's need to scratch (without sacrificing your furniture).

**A high-quality cat food.** Your cat is going to need a high-quality cat food in order to stay happy and healthy. We recommend finding out what sort of food they were eating before you adopted them so you can avoid changing their diet too suddenly, which can cause stomach upset. If you plan to switch her to a new food, mix her old food with the new food, gradually transitioning to the new diet to avoid digestive upset.

**Litter box and accessories.** All cats need a litter box. We recommend starting with an uncovered box just in case your cat is averse to using the bathroom in an enclosed space.

**Food and water bowls.** You need something to put your cat's food and water in. Preferably, these bowls should be stainless steel and easy to clean. You should also place them at least a foot apart to prevent food from ending up in your cat's water.

**Scratching post.** Cats need to scratch; it is an innate need. A scratching post is necessary to give them an appropriate place to scratch that isn't your living room chair.

**Toys.** Even if you're adopting an adult cat, they are still going to need a couple toys to play with. We recommend purchasing a variety of toys, especially if you aren't sure what types of toys your cat prefers yet.

**A bed.** While not every cat will use a bed, it is always a good idea to have one, so your cat has a space that can be completely theirs. Placing the bed in a quiet, safe place will encourage your cat to use it.

**A crate.** Your cat is going to need to go to the vet at some point, and a crate is essential for safely transporting your kitty to the veterinarian's office. You should purchase a crate as soon as you get your cat and keep it in a location where your cat can interact with it regularly.

**Grooming supplies.** Every cat is going to need a brush, toothbrush, and nail clippers. However, depending on your cat's fur type, they might need a few different kinds of brushes for grooming. (More about grooming in the next section.)

## GROOMING

These steps cover everything you need to know about keeping your cat's skin and coat clean and healthy.

**Consider your cat's coat type.** Cats are generally clean creatures, and they are mostly self-sufficient when it comes to grooming. However, some cats will need to be brushed regularly depending on their coat type. Those with long hair will need groomed more often than cats with short hair.

**Desensitize your cat to your grooming supplies.** Your first step in grooming your cat is to get them used to your grooming supplies. Leave the supplies out in a quiet place where your cat can explore them and become familiar with them.

**Brush your cat.** You should brush your cat carefully and gently. If your cat isn't used to being groomed, you should groom them in short bursts and reward them with treats when they don't move away from the brush.

**Clean your cat's teeth.** Don't forget to clean your cat's teeth. Brushing them daily is preferred, but this is not always realistic. Desensitize your cat to the toothbrush before using it and reward them when they come into contact with it.

**Clip their nails.** You'll need to clip your cat's nails regularly. Most cats will keep their nails worn down somewhat by scratching, but this is not always enough. Clipping your cat's nails will also prevent them from scratching you accidentally while playing.

**Check your cat for cleanliness.** While grooming your cat, check to ensure that they are keeping themselves adequately clean. Not cleaning themselves properly can be a symptom of an underlying disease, so always keep an eye out for this change in behavior.

**Consider using cat wipes.** Though cats are very clean, they can have problems reaching certain areas. Wiping them down with a wipe that is specifically designed for cats can help keep these difficult-to-reach areas clean. These wipes are also useful for the occasions when your cat gets into something they aren't supposed to have and makes a mess.

## CAT-PROOF YOUR HOME

Cats are largely self-sufficient, but that means they can be mischievous at times and get into things they shouldn't. These steps will ensure that your home is a safe environment for your feline (and also keep your home safe from your cat's shenanigans).

**Put electric wires out of reach.** Preferably, you should move all electrical wires off the floor and out of your cat's reach. However, this is not always practical. For cords you can't move, tape them down to discourage your cat from playing with them.

**Pick up small objects.** Your cat might be tempted to play with small objects left on the floor, such as paperclips and rubber bands. However, these can cause choking if accidentally swallowed, so be sure to remove them.

**Secure furniture.** Cats like to jump and climb. Wobbly bookcases and other unstable furniture can fall if your cat decides to scale them, so secure them properly with furniture anchors.

**Hanging cords.** Many window blinds have hanging cords. These things can seem very fun to your cat but can be dangerous for cats to play with. Tie the cords out of reach or cut them, so they don't form a loop that your cat may accidentally get caught around her neck.

**Loose screens.** If you have any loose screens on your windows, now is the time to fix them. The last thing you want is for your cat to jump up on the windowsill and fall out.

**Research your houseplants.** Many houseplants are poisonous to cats. We recommend double-checking to ensure that all your houseplants are safe for your cat to be around.

**Secure cabinet doors.** Cabinets can hold all sorts of dangerous things for your cat, but many cats are agile and clever enough to get them open. Purchase child safety locks for all the cabinets you don't want your cat to get into.

**Rethink your household cleaners.** Cleaners containing pine or phenol are toxic to cats. If you use any of these, you should switch to a more cat-friendly cleaner or ensure that these products are stored out of reach and are inaccessible to your cat.

**Double-check for toxic chemicals.** There are many chemicals that are dangerous to cats: fuels, cleaners, paints, herbicides, insecticides, xylitol, and fertilizers. You should put away all chemicals in your home and secure sugarless candies and gum.

## PREPARING FOR THE VET

Regular veterinary care is essential for a long, healthy life. Here's what you need to know about the vet care you should plan for when adopting a cat.

**Make an appointment as soon as possible.** Your cat should see the vet shortly after you adopt her for a checkup. This meeting will also allow you to ask your vet questions about your cat's care.

**Gather your cat's medical records.** You should ask for your cat's medical records whenever you adopt them. Your vet will want to see them to put together a medical background on your new cat.

**Bring your cat in a carrier.** You should bring your cat to the vet in a cat carrier. Preferably, your cat should already be comfortable in this carrier. Much of the exam can likely take place without ever removing your cat from this safe space, making the experience more positive for everyone involved.

**Bring along some of your cat's favorite things.** Placing your cat's bed and some toys in their crate can make the experience less stressful. You might also want to consider covering their crate with a blanket from home to block out some of the strange smells at the vet's office.

**Think about questions beforehand.** You should assemble a list of questions to ask your vet before you go. It is not uncommon to forget what questions you had when you reach the vet's office, so having a list down on paper can be very helpful.

**Consider your cat's habits.** Your vet will likely ask about your cat's eating, drinking, and toilet habits. However, relaying this information to your vet can be more difficult than it seems. Pay attention to your cat's habits a few days before your appointment and take notes if necessary.

**Get your vet's emergency contact information.** You never know when your cat might have an emergency. Having your vet's emergency contact information on hand or even programmed into your phone can save you precious minutes in an emergency.

**Ask if the vet needs a stool sample.** Depending on your cat's age and medical history, your vet might request a stool sample to check for various parasites and other ailments. This sample is often far easier to collect at home and bring with you than waiting for your cat to use the litter box at the vet's office.

**Schedule your cat's next checkup.** You should schedule your cat's next check-up before you leave the vet's office. Generally, adult cats need a yearly checkup. Keep the date and time of your cat's next checkup somewhere safe, add it to your calendar, and set reminders on your phone.

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Follow all the steps in this checklist, and you'll be well-prepared to welcome your new feline into your home – and a new friend into your heart for life.