

# New Kitten Checklist

Adopting a new kitten is a very thrilling time. You will have another, adorable family member to share your house with. However, adopting a new kitten can also be overwhelming. Your kitten is going to need a lot of care, and having the right equipment is essential to making that happen. You never really realize how much stuff a cat needs until you start shopping for one.

Luckily, we have put together this complete new kitten checklist so you can rest assured that you won't miss anything. From must-have cat products to vet visits to socialization, we've included everything you need to purchase or plan for your new kitten.



## MUST-HAVE KITTEN SUPPLIES

Here's what you need to set up your home for a new kitten and provide a safe, nurturing environment for your new pet.

**High-quality kitten food.** A high-quality kitten food is essential to keep your kitten happy and healthy. Check to ensure that a source of protein is the first ingredient and that the food is designed to meet a kitten's nutritional needs.

**A food and water bowl.** Your kitten should have a separate food and water bowl. Aim to purchase a pair that isn't too tall for your kitten to use comfortably.

**A litter box with accessories.** You will need to purchase a litter box as well as litter and a scooper to go with it. We recommend purchasing an uncovered litter box to start since some cats won't use covered litter boxes. Be sure your litter box is short enough for your kitten to climb into.

**Scratching post.** Unless you want your kitten to scratch your furniture, you are going to need to purchase a scratching post. Preferably, the scratching post should also double as a hide-out spot for your kitten.

**Grooming brush.** Some cats need to be brushed more than others. However, all cats are going to need brushed at least occasionally, especially when they begin shedding seasonally. Choose a gentle brush and begin getting your kitten used to it early on.

**A bed.** You should purchase a comfortable, kitten-sized bed for your new pet. This bed will provide them with a space that can be “theirs,” which can help them settle in faster and handle stress and overstimulation.

**Places to hide.** Your new kitten is going to need plenty of places to hide. It isn't uncommon for new kittens to spend most of their first day or two completely hidden away; it makes them feel safe. You can buy commercially designed cat structures or just set up your kitten's space to provide lots of hiding areas.

**Cat carrier.** You will need a cat carrier to transport your kitten to and from their vet appointments. Leaving the carrier open can also provide your kitten with a warm, enclosed space to hide.

**Identification.** Your cat needs some form of identification just in case they escape. A breakaway collar or microchip are two wonderful options.

**Toys.** Kittens are extremely playful, so it is important to have quite a few appropriate toys they can play with.

## TAKING YOUR KITTEN TO THE VET

Regular veterinary care is essential for your kitten's long-term health and well-being. Follow these steps to find the right veterinarian for your new kitten and ensure that she's getting all the veterinary attention she needs for a long, healthy life.

**Schedule an appointment as soon as you get your kitten.** Your kitten needs to be seen by a veterinarian shortly after you adopt them for a physical. Your vet will likely also discuss important aspects of your kitten's health and suggest how often you should bring them in for a checkup.

**Take your time choosing a vet.** Not all vets are the same. Some veterinarians specialize in certain types of animals or a specific set of medical problems. Take your time to choose a vet that fits your new kitten's needs and that you feel comfortable around.

**Your kitten might need some vaccinations.** Depending on your kitten's age, they might need some vaccinations. Most kittens are vaccinated against rabies, upper respiratory infections, and distemper. Some veterinarians also recommend vaccinations against the feline leukemia virus.

**Be ready to ask questions.** Think about any questions you might have regarding your kitten and write them down. Don't be afraid to ask your vet these questions during your appointment.

**Keep up with all your kitten's medical records.** You should have a secure, safe place to store all your kitten's medical records. Ask for a copy of your kitten's medical information and vaccinations before you leave an appointment. It is always a good idea to have these things on hand.



## KITTEN-PROOF YOUR HOME

Kittens are mischievous, a loveable characteristic that many cats never quite grow out of. Make sure your home is safe for your kitten to explore by following these steps.

**Pick up any small objects your cat might want to play with.** Kittens are playful creatures and will play with nearly everything they can get their hands-on. If they play with something inappropriate, however, they can accidentally swallow them.

**Remove plastic bags.** Sadly, it is not all that uncommon for a kitten to play with a plastic bag and accidentally get wrapped up in it. Before you bring your kitten home, be sure all plastic bags are put away and accounted for.

**Tape down electrical cords.** Kittens will play with electrical cords, which can cause them to be accidentally electrocuted. Remove all electrical cords you can from ground level and tape those down that you cannot.

**Research your houseplants.** There are many different houseplants that are poisonous to cats. Double-check that all your plants are cat-friendly before bringing your kitten home.

**Put the toilet seat down.** Kittens like to jump and climb, but they aren't always the most graceful creatures. Ensure that the toilet seats in your bathrooms are kept closed to prevent your kitten from accidentally falling in.

**Purchase child-proof locks for cabinets.** Simply closing a cabinet door is not going to keep your kitten out. Instead, purchase child-proof locks for all the cabinets you don't want your kitten in.



## TRAINING YOUR NEW KITTEN

Your new kitten may not yet know how to use the litter box, and she may be frightened by being transported to the vet or other locations in a crate. Follow these steps to help your kitten learn the ropes.

**Ask about your kitten's current training.** Though cats typically receive less training than dogs, there are still many things they need to be taught. Before you can begin, however, it is vital to ask whoever you adopted your kitten from about your kitten's current training. Does your kitten know how to use the litter box? How does she do in a crate?

**Train your kitten to use a litterbox.** Even if your kitten was already litterbox trained, it is common for them to regress after being adopted. Being in a new environment can be stressful, so be sure to take things slow and understand that your kitten isn't being purposefully disobedient.

**Get your kitten comfortable with the crate.** Just like dogs, kittens need to be crate trained for those times when a crate is necessary. Put the crate out with the door open and place the kitten's bed inside so she can begin acclimating to it. It is important not to force your kitten into the crate.

**Redirect her scratching to appropriate places.** In the beginning, your kitten will likely scratch where ever she wants to. But it is vital to redirect her scratching to a scratching post whenever you notice her doing it. Make her scratching post fun and reward her whenever she scratches on it.

**Take your time when teaching your cat the house rules.** Your cat will need to learn a lot of rules over the coming weeks. Be sure to take your time and not overload your kitten with too many rules at once.

**Consider restricting your kitten's access to the house.** Because your kitten has so many rules to learn, it is sometimes best to restrict their access to one room of the house and slowly build from there. This way your cat can learn only a few rules at a time while also not developing bad habits.

## GROOMING YOUR KITTEN

Regular grooming will help your kitten maintain a healthy skin and coat. Here's what you need to know about caring for your kitten's fur, dental care, and other grooming activities.

**Gather your equipment.** Before you begin grooming your kitten, you need to gather your equipment. Depending on your cat's breed, this will likely include at least a brush, a toothbrush, and nail clippers.

**Acclimate her to handling.** Your first step should be to acclimate your kitten to being handled. You should pick them up, touch their feet, and lift their lips.

**Get your kitten used to the grooming equipment.** You are also going to need to get them used to your grooming equipment. This will prevent them from being fearful. Put the grooming implements out where she can see and play with them.

**Brush your kitten.** All cats need to be brushed, whether they have long hair or short hair. Choose an appropriate brush for your kitten's coat type and take thing slowly for the first few times.

**Clean your kitten's teeth.** You should clean your kitten's teeth with nothing but a toothbrush and water. Speak to your vet if you think your kitten might need a toothpaste formulated for cats.

**Check your kitten's ears.** Your kitten's ears can become dirty, especially if he or she has not learned how to groom their selves properly just yet. If they appear dirty, they should be cleaned gently with a cleaning solution.

**Make sure your kitten is properly cleaning herself.** Cats will naturally clean themselves. However, depending on the age of your kitten, she might not be a master at keeping herself spotless just yet. If you notice your kitten has some grim built-up, consider wiping her down with a cat cleaning whip.

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Adopting a new kitten is exciting, but don't let your excitement prevent you from being prepared. Follow the steps in this checklist to ensure that you have everything you need to welcome your new feline friend into your home and your heart.