

CAT ADOPTION CHECKLIST

Cat Adoption Checklist

Congratulations on adopting a cat! You are embarking on a wonderful and rewarding relationship. Because adopting a new cat comes with a lot of change for both cat and cat parent, we've compiled a checklist to help make the transition as smooth as possible.

Questions for All Adopters:

- Do you have any other pets and how will they react to a new cat?
- Is your current residence suited to the cat you're considering?
- How will your social life or work obligations affect your ability to care for a cat?
- Do you have a plan for your new cat during vacations and/or work travel?
- How do the people you live with feel about having a cat in the house?
- Are you (or your spouse, partner or roommate) intolerant of hair, dirt and other realities of sharing your home with a cat, such as allergies?
- Do you or any of your household/family members have health issues that may be affected by a cat?
- What breed is the best fit with your current lifestyle?
- Is there tension in the home? Pets quickly pick up on stress in the home, and it can exacerbate their health and behavior problems.
- Is there an adult in the family who has agreed to be ultimately responsible for the cat's care?

Adopting The Right Cat

Other Considerations:

- If you are thinking of adopting a young cat, do you have the time and patience to work with the pet through its adolescence, taking playing, training and energy-level into account?
- Have you considered your lifestyle carefully and determined whether a younger or older cat would be a better match for you?
- Can you train and handle a cat with behavior issues or are you looking for an easy-going friend?
- Do you need a cat who will be reliable with children or one you can take with you when you travel?
- Do you want a cat who follows you all around the house or would you prefer a less clingy, more independent character?

Cat Costs:

- More likely than not, the adopting agency will charge a fee to help defray the cost of taking in unwanted or lost animals. The adoption fee you pay will be a tiny fraction of the money you will spend over the life of your pet.
- You may need to pay for your adopted cat to be spayed or neutered before bringing him or her home.
- Some expenses are mandatory for all pets, including:
 - Food
 - Routine veterinary care
 - Licensing according to local regulations
 - Collars and identification tags
 - Kitty litter and box
 - Basic grooming equipment and supplies.

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- **Other expenditures may not be required but are highly recommended**
 - **Permanent identification, such as a microchip or tattoo**
 - **Additional grooming supplies or professional grooming (depending on your new cat's needs)**
 - **A spare collar**
 - **A bed and toys**
 - **A crate or carrier**
- **Unexpected costs: Accidents and illness can result in costly emergency veterinary care.**

Time Considerations:

- **Cats need to be fed once to twice a day, more often in the case of kittens, and need a constant supply of fresh water.**
- **A responsible pet parent should spend at least one hour per day giving direct attention to his or her cat. This may include training, exercising, grooming, and playing or may just be lap time on the couch.**
- **A cat with an abundance of energy needs more time to exercise and interactive toys to keep them entertained.**
- **Cats with long coats need 20 minutes a day of grooming to prevent matting.**
- **Cats with certain medical conditions may need additional attention, including specifically timed injections in the case of diabetic animals.**
- **Remember that adopted cats may need additional bonding and reassurance time in the early weeks.**

Shopping Checklist:

It may be a good idea to wait until you select your new cat before you begin shopping for supplies. For example, some items, such as food and water bowls or collars and harnesses, depend upon the size of the cat you will be adopting. Also, be sure to find out which food your pet was eating in the shelter or foster home so that you can provide the same in the beginning, again to ease the transition. After the pet has settled in, talk with your veterinarian about switching to the food of your choice. Once you've selected your pet, here's a checklist of supplies you may need:

Necessary Items for Cats:

- **Food and water bowls**
- **Food (canned and/or dry)**
- **Litter box and scooper**
- **Kitty litter**
- **Collar**
- **ID tag with your phone number**
- **Hard plastic carrier**
- **Nail clippers**
- **Feline toothbrush and toothpaste**
- **Brush or comb (depends on your cat's coat length and type)**
- **Variety of toys (toys including catnip are a favorite)**

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Caring for your Barn Cats

In preparation for your Barn Cats' arrival, you'll need a few supplies

- XL Dog crate or other secure enclosure for acclimation
- Cat food (dry and canned)
- Food and water dishes
- One or two large litter boxes

Arriving Home & Confinement Training

Relocating feral cats and outdoor cats is not as simple as physically placing them in their new environment. Cats are very territorial and will often try to find their way back to where they came from. Cats who escape upon arrival usually bolt, never to be seen again. Not only is this dangerous for the cat, but this can also be traumatizing for the caregiver. The confinement period may be challenging, but it is very necessary. Fortunately, cats can acclimate to a new environment fairly easily. They must be confined initially in their new home for three to four weeks in order to familiarize themselves with the new environment. The relocation of cats can be challenging, but following the steps below will help make the transition successful.

- Prior to bringing your cats home, prepare a large crate or hutch inside a sheltered area such as a barn, shed, warehouse, tack room or other similar structure. Placing it on a large table or bench, bales of hay, or other elevated surface can make it easier to maintain and helps the cats feel a bit safer.
- Line the crate with a bathmat or newspaper; place a blanket inside, litter box, and dishes for food and water. We suggest placing a cat carrier without the door, or other type of box for them to feel even more secure. Placing a sheet over the back half of the enclosure will also help. A crate for each cat, placed side by side, provides each cat with more space.
- We will send your cats home in a carrier we refer to as a "loader." We can demonstrate how to transfer the cats out of this containment into their new space. The "loader" must be returned to the shelter as soon as possible to care for cats still at the shelter.
- Clumping litter is not recommended because it can be difficult to clean up should the cat make a mess of its cage overnight.
- Clean the litter box and give fresh food and water daily. Place the food, water, and litter near the front of the crate for better access for scooping, feeding and watering.
- The cats should remain in this enclosure for 3-4 weeks. After that, the cage door may be left open overnight, allowing access to a large secure barn or building.
- This should be done just before everyone leaves for the night, allowing the cats the opportunity to explore their new home on their own.
- The crate should remain set up, as they may wish to return to the cage during the night.
- After 1-2 more weeks the cats should be more comfortable with their new home and the cage can be taken away. The food and water bowls, and some bedding, should remain near where the cage was set up, so the cats are still able to locate their food source and familiar scents. The food dish may be moved in the future once the cat is comfortable and knows a constant supply of food and water is available.
- Once acclimated, caring for your barn cats is as easy as providing fresh food and water daily.