

Elmbrook Humane Society

Adoption Guide



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I have studied many philosophers and
many cats. The wisdom of cats is
infinitely superior.

— *Hippolyte Taine*



Check List

01

Food and Water Bowls

Be sure to pick a food brand with quality ingredients. Cats are natural carnivores so look for food that doesn't have grain in it. Cats also see stagnant water as dirty or unsafe to drink so try a water fountain!



02

Uncovered Litterboxes

Cats can feel trapped in covered boxes, and the odor can get very concentrated inside.



03

Unscented Litter

Some scented litters can deter cats from using the litter box so it is best to get unscented litter.



04

Scratching Posts

Scratching is a natural instinct for cats which means scratching posts are a necessity. Cats scratch so they can maintain healthy claws, stretch their muscles, and mark their territory.



05

Treats

Cats can enjoy a variety of treats. There are soft treats, crunchie treats, squeeze treats, and even filet treats. You can use treats to teach and reward good behavior.



06

Blankets and Bedding

Cats love to snuggle up whether it's in a warm bed or a pile of blankets. Make sure you help your cat feel "at home".



07

Breakaway Collar and ID Tags

Purchase a safe breakaway collar and make sure you have a tag that has your current contact information listed.



08

Cat Toys

There are all kinds of fun toys that cats can engage with and enrich their minds. A few examples are wand toys, feather toys, interactive toys, glitter balls, catnip toys, or ball track toys.



09

An Appointment With Your Veterinarian

Be sure to schedule an appointment with your vet so they can meet your animal and make sure they are up-to-date on treatments and vaccines.



Food Recommendations



Smalls	Smallbatch	Instinct
The Honest Kitchen	Open Farm	JustCats
Hound and Gatos	Stella & Chewy's	Ziwi Peak
Fromm	Weruva	Merrick
Tiki Cat	Lotus	Wellness
Wysong	Orijen	Canidae
Nature's Logic	Acana	Taste of the Wild



Cats are considered obligate carnivores which means they receive protein from meat sources. Choose a food where meat is the first ingredient and there are no byproducts or fillers such as brewers rice.

Veterinary Clinics



Elmbrook Humane Society is grateful to these veterinarians for donating their services; however, this list is not an EBHS endorsement or recommendation.

You received a half sheet in your adoption folder for a free wellness exam. It is important to get your new pet established with a vet in case anything medical arises. We have a list of veterinary clinics that accept the half sheet and you can view the lists below.

Veterinarians Inside Waukesha County

Click [Here](#) for the list of vet clinics in Waukesha County.

Veterinarians Outside Waukesha County

Click [Here](#) for the list of vet clinics outside of Waukesha County.



What To Expect



Cats Are True Predators

Your cat will need an outlet for their predatory instincts to hunt, catch, and kill live prey. This does not mean you have to let them outside to catch mice though. All you have to do is provide your cat with 10 minutes of interactive playtime each day.

Provide Plenty Of Hiding Spots And Vertical Spaces

Cats naturally feel safe and secure when they have places to hide. Vertical spaces such as a cat tree or shelf give them a place to escape what's on the ground.



Train Your Cat

Your cat is smart and loves to learn new things. Reward them for the behaviors you want them to do instead of punishing them for unwanted behavior. Using punishment only teaches your cat to be afraid of you and causes frustration.



Cats Don't Misbehave Out Of Spite

That's what humans do, not what cats do! If your cat eliminates outside of the litter box, this may mean they have a bladder infection or feel unsafe using the litter box. If your cat bites your ankles, this may mean they need more outlets to exercise their predatory instincts. Cats will never do something as a way to get back at you.



CAT LANGUAGE



Setting Up A Sanctuary Room For Your Cat



1. Feeding Station with food & water bowls
2. Uncovered litter box with 2-4 inches of unscented, unclumping litter
3. Variety of toys
4. Interactive wand toy (put away when not using, choking hazard)
5. Secure any areas underneath furniture
6. Cat-safe plants only
7. Cat bed & blankets
8. Vertical spaces

9. Window perch
10. Cat tree
11. Safe, but accessible hiding spots
12. Take any breakable items off furniture
13. Tall, sturdy scratching post

Cat Proof Your Home



Avoid Poisonous Plants

Cats like to chew on grass and plants, but some of them are irritating, dangerous, and even deadly to cats. Even non-poisonous plants can cause vomiting and diarrhea.



Lock Up Cleaning Supplies And Medications

Put child-proof latches on your cabinets to keep your cat from licking, chewing, or eating cleaning products and medicine.



Unplug your home

Unplug electrical cords when they aren't in use. If your cat's a chewer, they could be in for a nasty shock. You can also put cords in a cord protector.



Clip Those Claws

Indoor cats don't wear down their claws as quickly as outdoor cats do, so they can overgrow. Untrimmed claws can grow into a cat's paw pads, leading to infection, pain, and difficulty walking and using the litter box. Declawing is not a good option. Check your cat's claws every couple of weeks to see if they need to be clipped.



Tie A Knot In Cords

Keep drapery and blind cords coiled and out of reach. Your cat could get strangled by getting the cord wound around their neck or choke on a plastic pull cord knob that they've chewed into pieces.



Check the dryer (and other places)

Look inside the dryer before closing the door, and keep it closed when not in use. Cats love to hide in dark, quiet places, which can be a recipe for a tragedy. Kittens often climb into refrigerators, freezers, and dresser drawers, so check these, too, before closing them.



Secure Your Screens

Make sure your screen door and window screens have secure, sturdy latches. Don't run the risk that your cat could slip out unnoticed.



Scratching Habits



Cat's Like To Scratch When...

They are playing, stretching, marking territory, creating threatening signals to other cats, or removing frayed, worn outer claws.

Scratching can cause a lot of damage to furniture, drapes, and carpeting!

What Should You Do?

- Do not try to stop your cat from scratching.
- Teach them where and what to scratch.
- Provide them with appropriate, cat-attractive surfaces to scratch.

What Steps Should You Take?

- Provide scratching posts with different qualities and surfaces.
- Give your cat posts made of cardboard, carpeting, wood, sisal, and upholstery.
- Try vertical, horizontal, and slanted posts, as cats have different preferences.
- Provide additional posts in various locations.



ADDITIONAL TIPS

- Encourage your cat to investigate posts by scenting them with catnip, hanging toys on them and placing them in areas where they will be inclined to climb them.
- Discourage inappropriate scratching by removing or covering other desirable objects.
- Place scratching posts next to these objects, as "legal" alternatives.
- Clip your cat's nails regularly.
- Consider putting plastic caps on your cat's claws so that they won't do damage if they scratch on something in your home.
- If you need help, don't hesitate to call us!

Spray Bottle Alternatives

Don't Do This

Spray cat for scratching furniture.

Instead

Spray cat for jumping on counters.

Instead

Spray cat for getting into unwanted items.

Instead

Spray cat for excessive meowing during feeding time.

Instead

Spray cat for eliminating outside of the litterbox.

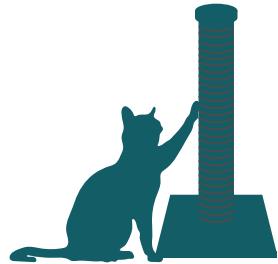
Instead

Spray your cat for biting.

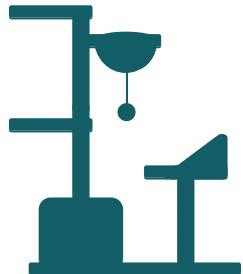
Instead

Do This

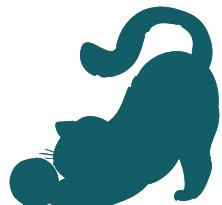
Provide multiple scratching posts and reward for using them.



Provide alternative vertical spots such as a cat tree or shelves.



Provide an enrichment item to keep the mind stimulated.



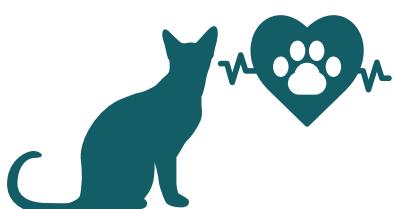
Feed on a schedule or give small portions throughout the day.



Schedule an appointment with your vet to rule out underlying medical issues.



Consult a veterinarian or behavior professional.



LITTER BOX

TIPS FOR SUCCESS



Use uncovered boxes that are 1.5 times the length of your cat



Cats can feel trapped in covered boxes, and the odor can get very concentrated inside



Scoop litter boxes at least once per day

Cats will often avoid using dirty litter boxes



Place litter boxes in areas with views of the room



Do not place in closets, cabinets, or any areas where cats can feel trapped



There should be one litter box per cat, plus one more



There are many triggers for litterbox avoidance that aren't included on this handout, including medical issues. Please have your cats examined by a veterinarian whenever there is a change in behavior.





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