

## Welcoming Your New Cat

Bringing a new cat into your home can be joyful and stressful – for both of you. Cats are creatures of habit and are very sensitive to environmental changes, so don't let the excitement of having a new companion overshadow the patience it requires to successfully transition your kitty to her new space. We want this to be a positive experience for you and your new cat, so here are some tips for starting off on the right "paw".

### Keep her in a "Sanctuary Room" for at least a week

1. Before you even bring your new kitty home, prepare a Sanctuary Room for her to live in.
  - ✓ Stock it with food, water, a litterbox, bed, and toys.
  - ✓ Make sure there are no places for the cat to hide (under a couch, in the walls or ceiling, etc).
  - ✓ Make sure it's a room people visit every day.
2. Take the cat out of the carrier and put her into the litter box first. Now she knows where it is!
  - ✓ If she does not want to come out, that's ok! Keep the carrier door open, leave the room, and close the door; she'll come out when she's ready.
3. Give her 30 minutes by herself to adjust to her new room.
4. After 30 minutes go in and sit quietly with her. If she is scared and not coming up to you, you can toss her some yummy treats (tuna, sardines, etc.) and then leave her alone. She just needs more time to settle.
5. Every time you go in the room, toss her a nice treat or play with her – do something pleasant so she associates you with fun things!
  - ✓ Don't force her to be touched. Cats like it when people respect their personal space.
  - ✓ Let her come to you when she's ready. It may take a few days or weeks. Just be patient.
6. Don't let her out of the Sanctuary Room until she has a good relationship with everyone in the home. She should come up to you and want attention most of the time before you let her free in the house.
  - ✓ If you let her roam free before she has a good relationship with you, she will hide and avoid everyone – not fun for her *or* for you!



## Letting her loose in the home

1. When you're ready to let the cat roam around the rest of the house, take it slow! Many cats will hide for days or weeks if they feel overwhelmed by a new environment.
2. Let her out into one room per day and supervise her closely to make sure she doesn't scratch, spray, or get into things she shouldn't. When she's done exploring, put her back in her Sanctuary Room.
3. Once she's been around each room and you feel certain she will not run and hide from you, it's time to let her roam freely about the home.
4. Do **not** move her litter box right away. She may continue to go to the bathroom where it was before, whether it's there or not.
  - ✓ Get another litter box and put it where you want it. After she has used it for a few days, you can move the first one out of the Sanctuary Room if you want to.
  - ✓ Always keep at least two litter boxes in separate parts of the home for her to use. This will greatly reduce the risk of her ever having accidents around the house.

## Your New Cat and Other Pets

If you have other pets in the home, do not rush introducing your new cat to them. You should have been given a handout on how to do introductions properly. You can reach out to us at [behavior@mountainhumane.org](mailto:behavior@mountainhumane.org) or (208) 788-4351 (ext. 114) if you are needing anymore tips or help with these introductions. Remember, first impressions count, so don't rush them!



## Litter Boxes

1. We recommend having 2 litter boxes for your new cat (if this is your only one) or adding an additional litter box with this new addition (if you already have cats).
2. You want to place the litterboxes in a low-traffic, quiet area with easy access for the cat(s). If you have multiple floors, we recommend at least 1 box per floor.
3. There are many types of boxes that you can purchase. We recommend choosing a box large enough that your cat can fit inside and turn around in.
4. Along the many types of boxes, there are many types of litter as well. We recommend a non-fragranced, finer grain litter. Once you choose a litter and box type that your new cat will use, stick to it as your new kitty will develop a preference for it.
5. Don't forget to buy a scooper too and clean the box at least once daily!



## Scratching

Scratching is a natural behavior in cats. Having an outlet for this behavior will greatly help your cat as well as preventing any scratching in unwanted areas (like your rug or furniture). Just as cats have litter box and litter preference, they also have scratching preferences. Some cats may

prefer horizontal scratching; others may prefer vertical. Some cats may prefer a carpeted scratching posts, some may prefer cardboard or sisal (rope). You may need to experiment with different types to find what your new cat likes best. Even cats that have been declawed will have a propensity to scratch,

Declawing is not something that is condoned by Mountain Humane as it is a permanent physical alteration of the cat and can lead to behavior concerns. **Please reach out to the behavior department at [behavior@mountainhumane.org](mailto:behavior@mountainhumane.org) or (208) 788-4351 ext. 114 if you need help with inappropriate scratching.** There are many ways that we can help redirect and manage this healthy and behavior.

## Enrichment

Did you know that ALL cats love toys? It's just a matter of finding what they like best and what they will play with. There is a huge variety of toys available, as well as homemade options you can try. A great way to keep things "fresh" and keep your cat from getting bored is to rotate through the various toys and offer your cat a new selection every week or two.

Most cats enjoy wand toys. Playing with your cat, or what we call "interactive play", can really help you form a bond with your new cat as well as help them feel more comfortable in their new home.

Having perches and hide-aways are another great way to enrich your cat's life. Having a place to go up high (or hide) is especially important in a multi-animal home. You can create these spaces with a cat tower or added cat-friendly shelves around the house.



## Common Myths About Cats

### 1. Cats drink milk *-false*

Cats are actually lactose-intolerant so those milk treats will hurt your cat's stomach.

### 2. Cats can't be trained *-false*

Like dogs and humans, cats learn by making associations. You can teach a cat many tricks and behaviors, the same way you'd teach a dog. Reward your cat when she does behaviors you like, such as using her scratching post or going into her carrier, and these behaviors are more likely to be repeated because your cat will make an association between doing that behavior and having something good happen to her.

### 3. Certain cats are "alpha" cats *-false*

Cats do not have a hierarchal social structure; they have very fluid relationships and while one might be more outgoing or timid than another, this doesn't fix them in a set social position in relation to other cats.

***Thank you for choosing to adopt your newest family member from Mountain Humane!***