

# ALMOST HOME

cat rescue

## NEW KITTY PARENT PACKET

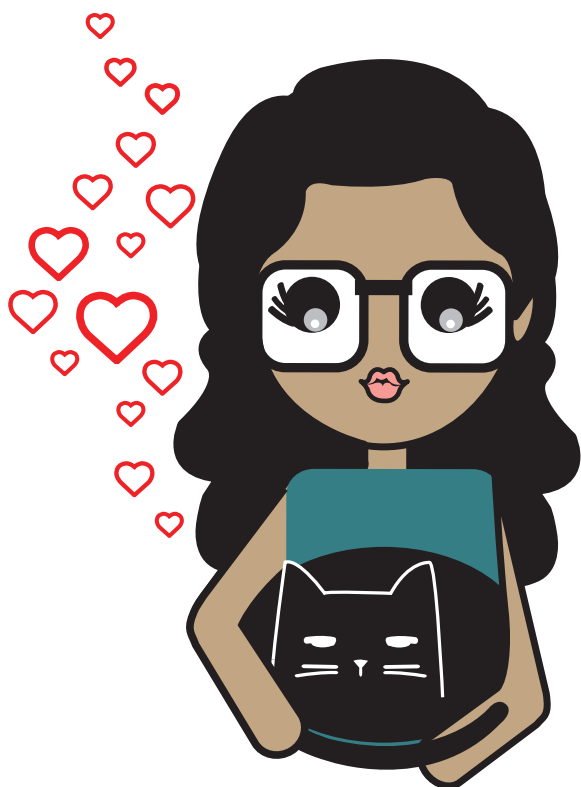
CONGRATS  
ON YOUR NEW  
**FURRY  
FAMILY**  
MEMBER!

Animals bring such joy and love to our lives, we are thrilled you are opening your heart and your home to welcome your new fur baby!

This guide will help you prepare your home, buy supplies, and make plans for a calm and happy transition. We will show you how to start parenthood feeling prepared with the best paw forward right meow!

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# PREPARE YOUR HOME

Cats and Kittens are curious by nature, and can get into tight spaces and high places so it is very important to remove or secure any dangerous items they can come across while investigating all areas of your home. Because they have nine lives, they are bold explorers! Cat-proofing is much like baby-proofing your home, just with a furry twist! Here is a quick list of things to check! Also see our infoguide on common cat hazards.

NEXT 

- 1 Plants:** Common plants toxic to cats are lilies, poinsettia, hydrangeas, philodendron, azaleas, tulips, daffodils, baby's breath and more. Make sure to do a quick search on ALL the plants in your home before bringing kitty in to see if they are toxic or hazardous. It is best to remove all the toxic plants from the home so there is no chance of accidental ingestion.
- 2 Cleaners and Chemicals:** Make sure to place cabinet locks on cleaning cupboards, or store these in a place high up and out of reach of your kitties! Also be sure to rinse any chemical residue from surfaces that kitty may access like floors, counters, tubs, and sinks. Close the toilet lid and keep the water free from cleaning cakes and chemicals, and do not use automatic cleaners. Garage chemicals like antifreeze, motor oil, windshield fluid, and salt/ice melts out of reach from kitty.
- 3 Food:** Some common foods toxic to kitties are avocados, onions, chocolate, raisins, grapes and foods containing xylitol a sugar alcohol. Also securely cover your trash, recycling, and compost bins!
- 4 Medications:** Some of the top items that poison kitties are over-the-counter medications and supplements, so be sure to have these safely stored in a secure medicine cabinet.
- 5 Cords, Strings, Yarn, Rubberbands, etc:** For electrical cords use protectors or fruit deterrents like citrus or bitter apple sprays to keep kitty safely away. For Blind cords, wrap them up to stay out of kitty's reach. Make sure to use only cat-safe toys with secure strings and ribbons, and make sure all your crafting supplies are securely tucked away where kitty cannot access. They are all very enticing "toys" but ingesting strings, rubber bands, and even dental floss can cause life threatening blockages that may require surgery, so be mindful to keep all of these out of reach.
- 6 Candles and Oils:** Live fire candles should never be used with fur babies in the house. Switch to LED flicker candles for safe "flames". Oils and potpourri can be toxic, so do a search before using any of these around kitty.
- 7 Shelves:** Kitties love to climb high shelves and do not care if they have to knock off heirloom items and valuables to get a better view of that squirrel or bird outside! Make sure to have cat-safe towers, condos, and even your own cat walk wall and shelves that are intended for kitty to jump on for a nice high view of their territory. Secure all breakables in cabinets where kitty does not have access.



**7 Windows, Screens and Doors:** Use baby gates to keep "door dasher" kitties safely inside, and make sure to check the security of all windows and the strength of all screens to ensure kitty cannot break through and escape where kitty does not have access.

**8 Washers and Dryers:** make sure to keep the doors closed on these machines and check each time before starting - especially dryers where it may be warm and enticing for kitty to nap.

# PREPARE YOUR HOME

## COMMON CAT HAZARDS

### 1 Plants



#### **INDOOR and OUTDOOR plants can be hazardous to your kitty!**

Eating small amounts can make your kitty sick, and large amounts can be fatal, so please keep the list below handy so you can protect your feline family members.

- LILLIES - these are especially harmful even in very small amounts. If ingested, this can cause life-threatening kidney failure.
- Pointsettias
- Mistletoe
- Holly
- PLUS MORE - please do a search on all plants in your home that are within kitty's reach!
- Baby's Breath
- Foxgloves
- Tulips
- Hydrangeas
- Amaryllises
- Philodendrons

### 2 Household Chemicals



#### **Keep these chemicals OUT OF REACH for your kitty!**

Be diligent to clean any spills quickly and properly. Be aware of outdoor animals when using these chemicals in your yard.

- PESTICIDES - insecticides and rodenticides
- GARDEN PRODUCTS - fertilizers, weed killers, Molluscicides like snail bait and pellets
- ANTIFREEZE
- PAINT THINNER
- SWIMMING POOL CHEMICALS
- CLEANERS including bleach, detergents, and disinfectants

### 3 Toxic Foods



#### **BEWARE of human foods that are HARMFUL to kitties!**

Some common foods toxic to cats are:

- Grapes
- Onions
- Raisins
- Avocados
- Chocolate
- Anything containing XYLITOL, a sugar alcohol

### 4 Medications



#### **HUMAN medications and flea treatments for dogs can be toxic to cats!**

Always consult your veterinarian before administering any medication to your kitty. Some common medicines that can be poisonous to cats are:

- Aspirin
- Acetaminophen (Tylenol)
- Ibuprofen
- Flea medication for dogs - cats cannot come into contact with a treated dog for 24 hours. HARTZ dog products are especially toxic to cats
- Vitamins and Dietary Supplements

# PLAN VET CARE + VISITS

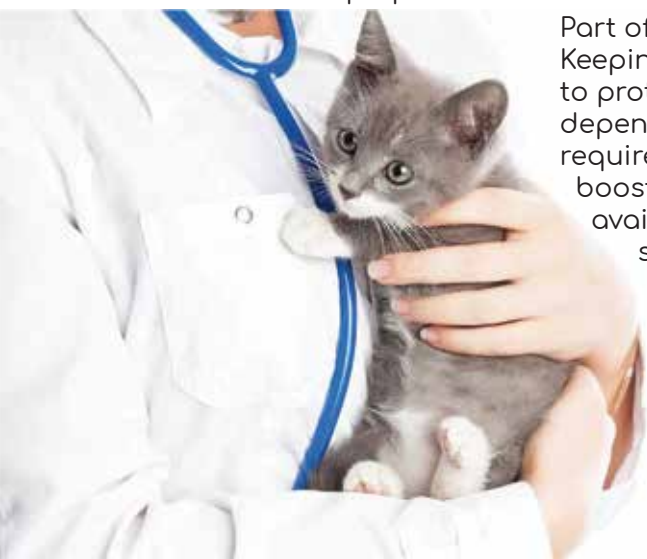
Welcoming a new fur baby is an amazing time in any family's life. Preparation can help keep the excitement rolling! Annual costs for a cat's medical care can be \$200-\$2000 for routine care. This can include physicals, dental cleanings, bloodwork, fecal exams for parasites, urinalysis, and more. The cost varies depending on where you live and your kitty's age and health status. Specialty care would be an added expense. It is good to plan not only for your fur baby's care, but also for the finances to support their health. Here are six simple tips to help you prepare and plan!

**1 Making Appointments:** It's important to schedule an appointment a few weeks after welcoming a cat to the family. New parents can learn a lot from observing their new feline family member prior to seeing a veterinarian. Unless there's a known medical problem, or if vaccines or other treatments are due, wait a couple of weeks so observations can be made. You can talk to your vet about any concerning behaviors you notice or ask questions about kitty's activities. Then, work with your vet to set a schedule for regular yearly checkups. Kitties should see the vet for annual wellness examinations, bloodwork and vaccinations. Older cats may require more frequent visits.

**2 Preparing for a visit and car rides:** Before taking kitty to the vet, it's important to get them used to their carrier. Instead of stowing the carrier in the back of the closet, let it sit out so it is not a scary thing that only comes out for bad stuff. Place the carrier out in the open and making it a warm, welcoming environment for kitty. Try making it a comfortable, cozy den and place a bed inside the carrier. You can also entice kitty inside the carrier with treats, toys and catnip. When it comes time to close the carrier and go to the vet, he won't be as stressed if they consider it a happy space. In addition to getting kitty comfy with the carrier, also try practice car rides before visiting the vet for the first time. Pop them in the carrier and do some cruising without a destination. Use Feliway or other calming pheromones to help relax them for the ride.

**3 Getting used to actions that will happen at the vet:** At a routine vet visit, kitty will undergo a thorough physical exam. This will include examining their coat, belly, eyes and ears, checking their teeth, listening to the heart and lungs, and taking their temperature and weight. You can expose kitty to these kinds of palpitations and handling by doing the same actions with them when they are relaxed and offering them a reward afterwards. They will become desensitized to the actions and even look forward to them since they expect a reward for their tolerance! This is positive reinforcement to get them accustomed to common actions they will experience at the vet.

**4 Having a great vet visit:** Above all else, cat parents should try to have a relaxed attitude when taking a cat to the veterinarian. Try to remain calm, and kitty will feed off your energy! Talk to your vet about mild sedatives to relax kitties that might have anxiety with car rides or going to the vet. Make sure to have kitty's medical and behavioral records! These records should show vaccinations and test results and give your veterinarian relevant historical medical information that may be useful in treating kitty. Behavioral notes can help your vet understand any triggers your kitty may have, and allow them to prepare better for the visit.



Part of kitty's medical record is their vaccination history and schedule. Keeping kitty healthy involves making sure they are regularly vaccinated to protect them from viruses and diseases. Cat vaccination schedules depend on the age of the cat and their vaccination history. Kittens require more frequent vaccinations than adult cats, but they will all need booster shots after their initial prime vaccinations. Many vaccines are available in 3-year doses, which means skipping the annual poke for some years if possible! Ask your Vet about what they offer.

Five common diseases that cats are regularly vaccinated against:

- Feline Viral Rhinotracheitis or FVR (herpes)
- Calicivirus
- Feline Panleukopenia
- Feline Leukemia
- Rabies

# PLAN VET CARE + VISITS

**5 Travel and Arrival:** When you are ready to travel, always practice safety while transporting kitty to the veterinary clinic. Before transport, make sure all doors, latches, zippers or other fasteners of the carrier are secure and functioning properly, and use the seat belt to fasten the carrier in the car. If kitty is anxious, or if the waiting room is crowded, talk to your vet in advance of your appointment to see if you can “check in” by calling from the car when you arrive at the vet clinic. They can call or text you when the exam room is ready to go, avoiding waiting room stress. If that is not possible, try getting a carrier cover that cloaks kitty inside a nice sanctuary space of their crate, allowing them to feel safe even in a chaotic environment. Spritz the carrier with Feliway an hour before leaving to give an extra layer of calming pheromones to their travel space! Videos are also helpful to bring to your vet visit if you have something you want the vet to review but that kitty might not exhibit while in the exam room.

**6 Plan for emergency care:** Now that your Routine Care plan is all set, it's time to make sure you know where the nearest trusted emergency veterinary clinics are and who has 24/7 hours. Many times emergencies happen beyond regular business hours, so it is good to have this plan set so you don't have to figure it out in a stressful situation. Here are Almost Home's preferred care providers:

## ROUTINE CARE



West Allis  
Vet Clinic

**Dr. G.S. Grewal**

11504 W. Greenfield Ave., West Allis, WI 53214

(414) 453-4344

<https://www.westallisvetclinic.com/#>

## EMERGENCY CARE



bluepearl

specialty + emergency  
pet hospital  
24/7 hours

**Glendale**

2100 West Silver Spring Dr., Glendale, WI 53209

(414) 540-6710

**Oak Creek**

400 W Ryan Rd., Oak Creek, WI 53154

(414) 761-6333



WVRC

WAUKESHA

24/7 hours

**WVRC Waukesha**

Wisconsin Veterinary Referral Center

360 Bluemound Rd.

Waukesha, WI 53188

(262) 542-3241

<https://wvrcwaukesha.ethosvet.com/>



MAYFAIR

Animal Hospital & ER

10am - 10pm daily

**Mayfair Animal Hospital & ER**

11637 W. North Ave., Wauwatosa, WI 53226

(414) 897-8840

<https://mayfairanimalemergency.com/>



# PLAN FOR EMERGENCIES

It is good to have your emergency veterinary resources identified before you need them. The next step in emergency planning is disaster preparedness. No matter where you live, catastrophe can strike without warning. Even if you're not susceptible to hurricanes or floods, you could be at risk for unpredictable disasters like earthquakes, tornadoes, chemical spills or even a house fire. No matter what the unexpected event, you need an emergency plan in place that includes your cats.

**1 Evacuation guidelines:** When you evacuate, never leave animals behind even if officials promise you'll only be gone for a few minutes. If it isn't safe for you, it's not safe for your cat. Minutes can expand into weeks before you're permitted to return. Attach an animal alert sticker to a window near your front door. Cats can be challenging to catch during an emergency because they instinctively hide from danger. Since most cats associate the appearance of the carrier with the vet, they hide, so the best preparation is doing carrier training BEFORE an emergency. You learned the basics of carrier training on the previous page. If you have not done carrier training yet, try swaddling your kitty gently with a towel. Once swaddled, you can then easily slide them into a carrier and head for safety.

**2 Reuniting Tools:** If kitty is separated from you in the emergency situation, there are other tools you can use to help find them. You can train kitty to respond to clicker, snaps, whistles, or rustling a bag of treats as a way to reunite if you have lost touch in the in a disaster. Also see our infoguide on "Tips for Finding a Lost Cat". You can also ensure kitty is microchipped and you can add a collar with ID tag so that you can be reunited if disaster separates you.

**3 Practice Evacuation:** Just like fire drills in school, go through the motions occasionally, and get kitty in the car and drive to safety. If you have a plan and stay calm, kitty will stay calm too! Cats are very susceptible to "emotional contagion" where they are influenced by the emotional state around them - good and bad. Being playful helps you to stay calm and carry on. Call ahead to shelters and make sure you know which ones allow companion animals. Some shelters require proof of vaccination so make sure this is also included in your "go bag" when you leave.

**4 Emergency kit:** Your kitty's emergency kit / go bag should include:

- A carrier you can grab easily for each cat. Add your contact info and their photo to the outside
- Copies of all the cats' medical and vaccination records, licenses and ownership papers
- A list of important phone numbers including your vet, er clinic, animal poison center, and shelters
- Food for 2-weeks - dry food, which can last longer, and make sure the wet food cans have pull tabs
- Water - at least a 1/2 gallon per day per kitty, plus bowls for water can food
- Medications and any prescription foods, and a first aid kit (see below)
- Litter box, litter, scoop, bags for used litter, paper towels and baby wipes
- A harness and a leash in case they are frightened and you need more help handling them
- Their favorite blankets, beds, toys and even a used t-shirt of yours can ease their anxiety and stress
- Calming remedies like Feliawy, or sedatives can help comfort them in an emergency situation

## Kitty First Aid kit should include:

- exam gloves
- antibacterial packets
- vet wrap wound tape
- mylar blanket for warmth
- squeeze activated cold pack
- hydrogen peroxide and iodine
- alcohol pads
- tweezers, clippers and scissors
- Benadryl - 2mg per kg of body mass
- antibiotic ointment
- styptic powder
- saline eye rinse



# PLAN FOR TRAVEL

A successful trip with kitty begins long before the day of travel. Planning and preparation are an absolute necessity. Do research and make careful considerations for carrier types and sizes, kitty's needs and experience during travel, and paperwork that may be needed prior to and at the time of travel. With some advance planning, attention to detail, and consultation with your vet and behaviorists, you can create an awesome experience for you and your fur baby!

**1 Choose the right carrier and accessories:** When choosing a carrier, make sure you consider all the ways you will use it. Some folks will only ever take their kitty in a car, while others will consider requirements for air travel, train rides, and other modes of transport. Check to make sure the carrier meets all requirements for every intended mode of travel, like weight and dimensions. Make sure the carrier is big enough for kitty. A general rule is to choose one where they can stand up and turn around. You may also want to give kitty a breakaway collar, a harness, and a leash.

**2 Paperwork:** When choosing a carrier, make sure you consider all the ways you will use it. Some folks will only ever take their kitty in a car, but others need to consider requirements for air travel, train rides, and other modes of transport. Check to make sure the carrier chosen meets all requirements for every intended mode of travel, like dimensions and weight. Next, make sure the carrier is big enough for kitty. A general rule is to choose one where they can turn around and stand up easily. You may also buy a breakaway collar, a harness, and a leash to help protect and secure kitty during travel.

**3 Carrier training:** Teach kitty that the carrier is a great place to hang out! Feeding them yummy meals and irresistible snacks in the carrier can help create a positive association. Practice opening and closing the door while kitty is inside enjoying a treat. Always have the carrier open and available in your home and make it as inviting as possible by adding a cozy bed or blanket so they want to nap inside. Place their favorite toys in there as well to make a tiny apartment of awesomeness! The toys will stay inside for travel to help calm kitty and combat boredom. Practice entry and exit from the carrier to make it as routine a process as possible. Place yummy treats inside and outside of the carrier, alternating movement across the threshold in a fun engaging way. If kitty is more motivated by play, use a laser light they can chase in and out of the carrier. Remember with laser light play to ALWAYS end the play session by landing the light on a toy that they can physically attack. This reduces stress from not being able to "catch" the light. For an added bonus – offer a treat after laser light play and landing on the toy. This replicates the "hunt – catch – eat" cycle they would perform in the wild.

**4 Other helpful tips:** To minimize the risk of nausea and vomiting during long travel, withhold the last meal before travel. Bring a small quart bag filled with kitty's dry kibble food with you, a water bottle and bowl that you can give them immediately upon arrival. Line the carrier with an absorbent "puppy potty pad" in case kitty needs to urinate or defecate during travel. Carry extra pads as well as a couple of zip-top bags, some paper towels, pet-friendly cleaning wipes, and a few pairs of latex gloves or any necessary cleanup and containment of a mess. Remember to bring medications and special food. Some kitties may experience stress when traveling. If this is the case for your kitty, talk to your vet and a feline behaviorist to create the best travel plan for kitty. Some things to consider:



- A Thundershirt® which comforts cats much like swaddling an infant and can reduce anxiety.
- Feliway® pheromone wipes and spray can be used in the carrier prior to flying can help lower anxiety.
- A pheromone calming collar can help to lower anxiety.
- Examples of medications that are sometimes prescribed by vets to reduce the anxiety in cats:
  - Buprenorphine - brand names Buprenex®, Simbadol®
  - Gabapentin - brand name Neurontin®
  - Alprazolam - brand names: Xanax®, Niravam®

Be sure to provide a dose at home as a "dry run" ahead of your trip so you know how kitty will react to the medication.

# GO SHOPPING!

Do a shopping spree for your new fur baby! Below is a list of essentials to buy for your kitty to ensure they eat and sleep well, get their play on, and have everything to make life awesome!

## 1 The Basics:

- Bowls for food and water, and consider investing in a cool drinking fountain for kitty!
- Buy at least one litter box per cat, but if you can fit the # of cats +1 litter box, this is best!
- Cozy beds, blankets, and soft cubbies for all those essential cat naps!
- Cat towers, trees, wall shelves, and window perches let kitty go up high and survey their territory!
- Collars, harnesses, leashes, and ID tags are fun items to buy for when kitty goes on adventures!
- Buy a carrier that allows for kitty to stand up and turn around naturally.
- Buy scratching posts and pads so kitty can stretch their muscles and manicure their nails!

## 2 Toys: All kitties benefit from mental and physical stimulation! Now is your chance to try different toys to see what they love the best!

- Wand toys can be fun for kitties that like to jump a chase.
- Laser lights can be great interactive fun, but ALWAYS remember to "land" the light on a toy when you finish playing. This alleviates any stress from the session as the kitty can do a final pounce on a toy to simulate a hunt. Then, give kitty a yummy treat to complete the hunting cycle - stalk : pounce : eat!
- Consider "noise maker and shakers" for kitties that like sound and movement as they play. Crinkle balls, chirping toys, and rolling balls can all mimic prey rustling around as kitty hunts.
- Sensory toys like feathers, jute, catnip, and silver vine can help kitty relax or be stimulated!
- Self-play toys like cardboard boxes, door hangers, and motion-activated toys can help relieve boredom in the hours you are away from home.

## 3 Food + Treats

- Make sure to cover your kitty's nutritional needs that align to their life stage. Kittens need very different nutrition and feeding schedules when compared to a senior or adult cat.
- Look for quality, high-protein options for wet and dry food. Remember, cats are obligate carnivores, so making sure high-quality meat is the first ingredient in the food is super important. Just like a healthy human diet, limited ingredients and no fillers or preservatives are best for your fur baby.
- Make sure the food you choose is free from red dyes. These are proven to cause cancer.
- Look for treats with high protein and great quality meat as the first ingredient. Use treats wisely for positive reinforcement and training, and be aware of the calorie count so you don't overfeed kitty.
- Some kitties really enjoy food and treat puzzles for extra mental and physical stimulation. Use kibble or a yummy treat in a mat, ball, or fun interactive puzzle they can solve for a delicious snack!

## 4 Environmental Enrichment: Smells, sounds, and nature are a big part of a kitty's environment. A cat's sense of smell is far superior to a human's. Cats have 200 million odor sensors, and humans have a mere 5 million. For hearing, cats can hear 60,000 vibrations per second where we humans hear a meager 20,000. They also have 32 dedicated ear muscles which allow them to rotate 180° to catch sounds from an impressively broad range. Humans only have 6 ear muscles! Because of a cat's superior senses of smell and hearing, careful consideration should be given to creating a comforting environment for them. Calming sounds your kitty might like to hear may be those from nature. Bird videos or ambient nature sounds can be very relaxing or stimulating depending on kitty's mood. Consider animal relaxation music which is similar to soothing spa soundtracks. This can be relaxing for kitty and for you! Because kitty can smell 14x better than us, be very aware of scents you have in your home. Strong air fresheners and deodorizers may be great smelling to us, but can overwhelm a kitty's extraordinary sense of smell. Look for natural, non-toxic options to keep your home and litter box smelling fresh. You can also add pheromones to kitty's environment to help calm them and ease anxiety and stress. We love Feliway diffusers that plug in to the wall and emit a synthetic feel-good kitty pheromone! Leaving your scent in kitty's environment can also be very soothing if your kitty has separation anxiety. Leave a t-shirt you have worn in their favorite bed to help calm them. Safe outdoor access, like sunrooms and catios are an amazing way to keep kitty safe and be one with nature! Getting kitty trained to wear a harness and leash can also be a fun way to let them safely take walks outside! If you allow kitty safe direct outdoor access, please remember to give them monthly parasite treatments. You don't want a house full of fleas, and your kitty does not want a horrible intestinal parasite!



# CLEANING



## A clean home is a happy home!

Make sure you know what cleaning products work best for kitty messes, and also which ones are safe to use around animals. It is super important to keep your home clean to give your kitty and the whole family a safe and happy environment in which to thrive!

### 1 Cleaning and disinfecting products and cleaning tools:

- Enzymatic cleaners – these attack the odor causing bacteria and help to get rid of new stains as well as old set-in messes. Our favorite is Nature's Miracle.
- Mild dish soap – use this to clean out litter boxes at least once a month.
- 1:32 bleach water solution in a spray bottle to be used for disinfection from illness and parasites.
- 1:16 Rescue cleaner in a spray bottle to use for viral, bacterial, and fungal outbreaks.
- Black light – this small tool shows you all the places that have been soiled we can't see with the naked eye. If you don't get every stain cleaned properly, kitty will go back there to do their business!
- Litter mats – these can really help minimize the litter that can be tracked away from the box.
- Steam mop – this is a great tool for daily and weekly floor cleaning.
- A Pet hair vacuum and Dustbusters or robot vacuums will help control and remove hair in the home.

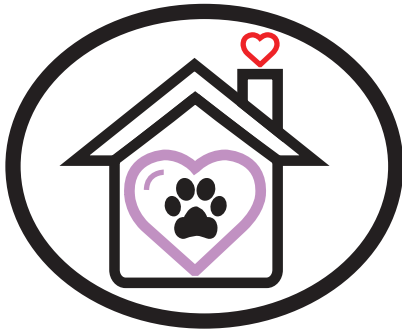
### 2 What to clean and how often:

- Food and water bowls should be rinsed daily and cleaned with hot water and mild dish soap weekly.
- Litter boxes should be scooped at least once a day, more if you can.
- Litter boxes should have litter changed completely at least once a week for clay, and every 2-3 weeks for clumping litter. Once the boxes have been emptied, clean them and your scoop with mild dish soap in hot water. Use bleach spray to coat after cleaning to disinfect.
- Plastic litter boxes should be replaced every 6-8 months, since scratches get embedded in the boxes. Scratches can harbor bacteria, and cause illness. Stainless steel boxes are more easily cleaned and sanitized and a healthier alternative to plastic.
- Wash bedding and blankets in phases - rotating weekly to ensure you always leave something that has kitty's scent on it in their environment. This is calming for kitty when they smell themselves in their home and help reduce stress and anxiety.
- Wash soft toys in a mesh bag in the washer, and wash hard toys with mild soap in hot water as needed
- Spot clean messes daily, shampoo carpets regularly as needed, steam mop hardwood and tile weekly.
- Strip + Sanitize when there has been an illness or a parasite outbreak. Take all bedding, blankets, soft toys and other soft things that can go in a washing machine and wash in hot water with bleach. Disinfect all hard surfaces and clean all furniture, towers, condos, and floors thoroughly. Use Rescue disinfectant and bleach water spray as needed for outbreaks.



# SANCTUARY SPACE

## Create a kitty sanctuary room for your fur baby's arrival!



Now that you have done lots of fun shopping and research, it is time to set up a base camp for your kitty! This space should be small to start, and you can gradually open up more of the house as kitty settles in. Kitties are very sensitive to changes in their environment and can easily become overwhelmed with too much space in their new home. Here are simple steps to follow to ensure you get a calm and happy place all set for kitty's arrival to your family!

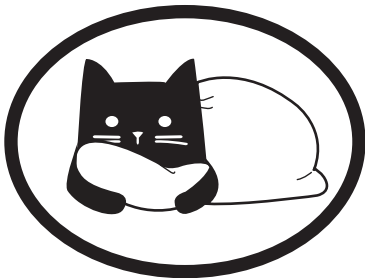
- 1 Start small and quiet:** Set up a small bedroom or bathroom that has a door. The new kitty's safe space and base camp should be in a part of the house that is more quiet, and not one that has any noisy appliance like a washer and dryer. A new space with scary noises will cause anxiety and stress for the kitty. Consider playing calming music or talk radio softly in the room for a few hours daily to help kitty to get used to human sounds. Make sure the room that separates them has a solid sturdy door. Add a baby gate to the doorway so you can ensure they stay safe as they get settled in.
- 2 Gather the basics and create safe places in the room:** Kitty's room should have all the basics - litter boxes, fresh water and food, cat towers, and soft cozy beds. Consider cubbies or covered beds if you know they kitty is shy or needs more socialization. These are considered "good" places to hide where you can still get access to them. Take away "bad" places to hide like under the bed, dressers, closets, and other tight spots under and behind things where you cannot see or interact with the new kitty. If they have access to these "bad" spots, you will be in effect teaching them to hide from you, and that is not a good start for you or for them. You can easily create temporary barriers to these places by cutting cardboard strips and duct taping them around these areas. It only usually takes a few days or a few weeks for kitty to feel
- 3 Toys and treats:** Make sure the room is stocked with fun toys for kitty to play with when they arrive! If you know their preferences, get lots of things they enjoy. Some kitties like feathers, wand toys, rolling balls, or plush toys they can kick and bite. Whatever your kitty's preference, make sure to rotate toys as well. Kitties can get bored with the same old toys every day, so try offering different toys on different days. Treats can also be super enticing for kitty and they will look forward to you coming into their room if they learn that you always bring a yummy treat!
- 4 Calming aids:** Some kitties may need some extra support to remain calm in a new space. One of the best things to add is a Feliway diffuser to their room. This plugs into the wall and dissipates a synthetic version of the kitty's "feel good" pheromone. This comes in an atomizer as well, which you can use to spritz beds, blankets and other things in the room as an extra dose of calming air. There are also calming collars, supplements, and treats that might be enticing for a nervous or anxious kitty. They also make kitty Thundershirts for swaddling a kitty to allow them to feel comforted. Good old fashioned cuddle time is also often a good strategy to get kitty feeling good about their new space. If they like attention and snuggles, lay on the pets and cuddles to help them settle in.
- 5 Cat Camping:** For added fun and comfort - try cat camping in kitty's room the first few nights. If they are in a bedroom you can sleep there, or pop a sleeping bag on the floor and do some old school camping with kitty to allow them to get used to you and their new space.

# THE 3 - 3 - 3 RULE:

**3 days**  
**3 weeks**  
**3 months**

Patience and understanding are key to learn how your newly adopted kitty will adapt in your home. Every kitty is an individual with a different personality and experiences, so each journey is a bit different. This is a good framework to help you interpret how they are feeling and learn ways to support them as they adjust.

**3 DAYS**  
to  
decompress



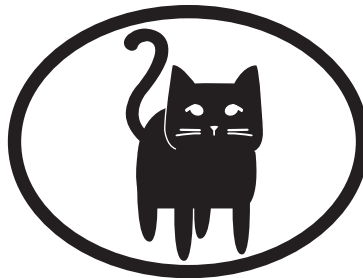
**they may experience:**

constant hiding  
feeling overwhelmed  
scared, uncomfortable  
unsure about themselves  
may not want to eat or drink  
may test boundaries

**what to do to help:**

Set up their "safe zone" in a small room to start. Give them all they need: food, water, litter box, comfy bed, cat tree, a scratcher, and toys. Give them space to settle in, but also start a routine with them for feeding and playtime. Add extra enrichment like a Feliway diffuser, interactive toys, catnip or silver vine. You can even try "cat camping" to spend the night with them to allow them to investigate you and their new digs!

**3 WEEKS**  
to  
learn your routine



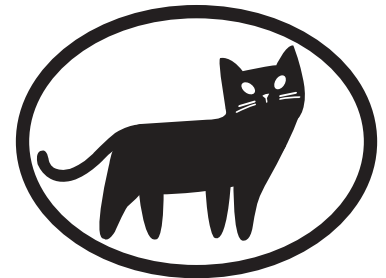
**they will likely start to:**

- feel more comfy and settled
- figure out the home and how they fit in to the routine
- show their true personality
- realize that this is their forever home

**what to do to help:**

Keep a consistent schedule for feeding and playing - kitties love routine! Play to their interests - get more of the kinds of toys, treats, beds, condos, and scratchers they love to make them feel very welcome. Start opening up the entire home, and make gentle introductions to new people and any furry roommates. Please see our guide on cat and dog introductions to help create a happy home for you and all your fur babies!

**3 MONTHS**  
to  
start to feel at home



**they will now begin to:**

- routine is now normal
- begin to show trust
- build a bond with you
- feel safe and secure
- feel completely comfortable in their forever home

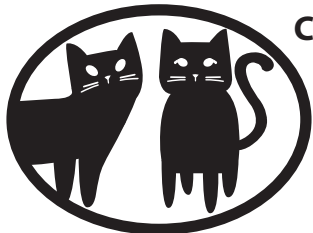
**what to do to help:**

Maintaining a schedule is a great way to show that you understand your kitty and their needs. Giving them love and affection in ways that they want is respectful and compassionate. Now is the fun time to let their true personality shine - support their interests and remove or minimize things they find undesirable. You can also start training activities! Kitties respond very well to positive reinforcement and enjoy learning new things!

# PLAN INTRODUCTIONS

## Cat to Cat Introduction

### Multi-cat households are amazing!



#### Congrats on deciding to expand your feline family!

Bringing home a new addition to the family is exciting and can be very smooth with preparation and a good introduction plan in place. Setting a timeline for this process is loose, as it depends on both kitties' personalities and adherence to the plan. But don't fret - we have you covered with a step-by-step approach and expectations. Remember - patience is your best friend during this process!

### 1 HOME PREP and SAFE SPACES for each kitty

#### Environmental changes are hard, so create spaces where kitties feel safe and comfortable



- Set up a small bedroom or bathroom that has a door as the new kitty's safe space and base camp.
- Use an enzymatic cleaner to remove any residual scent of the resident kitty.
- The room should have all the basics - litter boxes, fresh water and food, cat towers, soft beds, and "good" places to hide where you can still get access to them. Block "bad" places to hide like under the bed, dressers, and other tight spots where you cannot see or interact with the new kitty.
- Bring toys, treats, and attention as they settle into their new space.
- The rest of the house can remain your resident cat's base camp, making sure to have the same basics and enrichment items for them as well.

### 2 SCENT Stage

#### Cats communicate most with their noses, so this step is super important to do well!



- Rub a washcloth or soft cloth on each kitty's cheeks to deposit their scent. Swap this cloth, their bedding, blankets, and toys to introduce each of them with scent first. Pair that moment with a high value reward: a small treat, petting, play or attention - whatever each kitty loves the most! This helps to build great memories of the scent + something they love! Watch for any hissing and growling. They should be curious and actively sniff the objects that have the other's scent.
- Brush one kitty and take it to the other to smell. Then brush the other kitty to co-mingle scents.
- Do "space swap" with giving each kitty the other's territory, but make sure to NOT LET THEM SEE each other as you swap space. Use a carrier to keep each kitty hidden from the other as you swap spaces.
- Keep Feliway diffusers plugged into multiple locations in the house to add "feel good" pheromones.
- If there are no adverse reactions to the other's smell after one week, go to the next step. If there is any fear, anxiety, or aggression continue this step paired with the reward until there is only a calm reaction.

### 3 HEARING Stage - FOOD / TREAT / PLAY (Still NO SIGHT)

#### Continue building "good memories" with treats, play, and other fun things!



- After both kitties are comfortable with each others' scents and/space swapping, start feeding their meals on opposite sides of the closed door. They should still NOT see each other, but simply enjoy their meal or treat while being able to HEAR and SMELL one another with the door still as the barrier.
- Do these "no sight" meals / treats for one week. Each day, move their bowls closer to the door until they are right against the door. Have a helper supervise one side, and you supervise the other side.
- Make sure there is no hissing or tension - if so, move them back and start at a greater distance apart.
- Add playtime with toys, catnip, and other fun things for each - still separated by the door. They should HEAR all the noises associated with play, as well as any meowing the other kitty may do.
- Continue space and scent swapping, and make sure the kitties still do not see one another yet.
- This is where patience is your friend! Go slowly to set this foundation properly.

# PLAN INTRODUCTIONS

## Cat to Cat Introduction

### 4 SIGHT Stage

**Great work - kitties are calm and comfortable so it is time for the next step!**



- Once the kitties are good with the closed-door feedings and play, it's time for them to see one another.
- Have a friend or family member be prepared to monitor one kitty while you monitor the other. Be ready to react to any tension. You can use a body harness for added restraint.
- Place a baby gate in the doorway and drape a towel over it to block most of the line of sight. Open the door a small amount. Slowly move the towel to show about ¼ of the baby gate so they can now start to see one another. Have multiple play sessions like this, and remember to give them yummy treats and meals on their sides of the baby gate. This is using positive reinforcement building good new memories with one another! Stay 10 feet apart at first, and slowly move them closer at each session. Try to do at least three sessions pulling more of the towel back so they see more each time. You want them to be curious or neutral, without aggression or anxiety. Do more sessions as needed.
- If small grumbles or tense body posture happens but they still eat, monitor them and continue each day moving their bowls closer over the next week or two. Let the kitties guide the pace.
- If higher tension arises (loud growling, hissing, swatting, lunging) close the door immediately and go back to a few more days of feeding with the door closed, then start this step again.
- Have toys to distract them and blankets to use as barriers if any anxious behaviors start.
- As the kitties remain calm and comfortable, continue scent and space swapping, playing and doing other fun activities through the baby gate. Monitor and gradually move them closer together.
- You should end with each kitty eating right next to one another on opposite sides of the baby gate.

### 5 MONITORED INTERACTION Stage

**Now kitties are starting to become pals, so let's expand their time together!**



- Share short times together in the same room - 10 or 15 minutes to start, gradually increasing time.
- Use toys and playtime, attention, treats, and meals to keep each kitty focused on fun, happy things!
- Supervise the kitties' interactions until there is no need for distractions and they comfortably can hang out with each other for long periods of time. Once they reach an hour of hanging out calmly with no issues, they have graduated to buddy status!

### 6 OPEN PLAYTIME and LIVING

**Buddy time can now be more open and move to unsupervised**



- Now kitties can hang out with one another for 1/2 days with minimal supervision.
- Work up to having their first day or overnight together. Be prepared to intervene if anything happens, but if they have reached this stage, everyone is doing well and I would not expect any big issues.
- HOWEVER: kitties have bad days just like us, so there may be times when issues arise.

**If issues arise - remember it's a marathon, not a sprint!**

- Each kitty has a distinct personality and it is important to recognize their individuality and be able to read their behaviors, vocalizations, and body language. See "Socialization and Reading Behaviors" for more information and tips on deciphering kitty behaviors.
- Be prepared to STOP sessions if tensions get too high, or the kitties break into a kerfuffle. A soft blanket is good to have on hand to scoop up a kitty or drape over them to create a barrier between cats.
- Be patient! If you go too quickly, don't fret. Simply take a step back and start over tomorrow. This process is never linear, so going forward and backward is expected.
- Stay upbeat - kitties can sense your tension too! Use positive reinforcement and happy associations through treats, play, and attention to always end on a positive note to build good memories 🐾

# PLAN INTRODUCTIONS

## Cat to Cat Introduction



### GENERAL TIMELINE EXAMPLE

**Remember - every cat has their own personality and history. They will let you know how they are feeling with their actions and body language. Being able to read their reactions and emotions will help you to guide the pace of this process.**

**Remember to let them steer you for how quickly or how slowly this goes!**

**Have patience, and go at their pace!**

**This is not an absolute timeline below, just generalized guidance - adjust as needed:**

#### **DAY 1-3:**

Keep each kitty in their separate safe space and have only have human interaction. Keep the cat that is allowed access to the house away from the other side of the door for the first 24 hours so the kitty that is in the closed room can get used to their new environment and you. Make sure to have a few towels and blankets in the kitty's space where they rest or sleep. This will deposit the kitty's scent on them to use in scent swapping. Do the same separately with the other cat. This is the first step to prepare the kitties for the next step of scent swapping! Generally, we like to give kitties three days to decompress and adjust to a new space. This can be shorter or longer depending on the individual kitties.

#### **DAY 3-7:**

**SCENT:** Swap towels with the cats. You can also swap beds, toys, brushes and other things that each kitty has scented. Remember, you are looking for any adverse reactions. If you get hissing, swatting, attacking, or read any anxiety from either cat, move the pace forward more slowly. Remember to pair a valuable reward (petting, attention play, cat grass, treats, etc.) with the moments you introduce the other cat's scented item to create good memories with positive reinforcement! Go more quickly if the kitties are calm or neutral. Read their behaviors and look for warning signs. Next start space swapping.

#### **WEEK 2:**

**HEARING:** With the door closed, allow the cats to hear one another from the other side as they play and have yummy tasty meals. After they remain calm for this activity, do the same - play and have tasty meals but now with the door open, baby gate in place, and a towel over the baby gate so they still do not see one another - just hearing and smelling.

#### **WEEK 3:**

**SIGHT:** With the door open, start to pull the towel draped over the baby gate back slowly over a few meals or play sessions to reveal the cats slowly to one another. Keep going if the reactions are calm or neutral. If there is any adverse reaction, go back to the hearing stage for a few days. Start the sight stage again after that. Next, have tasty meals and treats on each side of the baby gate, moving the kitties closer together slowly to get them a few inches apart on each side of the baby gate. Continue space swapping.

#### **WEEK 4:**

Remove the baby gate and play in the same space. Have a helper manage one kitty while you manage the other. Watch for signs of fear, anxiety and stress. As calm moments become consistent, increase the time they are together each day, as they allow. As things remain calm, build up to longer sessions, and then have unsupervised time together. After this foundation is set, they can interact freely in the house!

# PLAN INTRODUCTIONS

## Dog to Cat Introduction

### Households with dogs and cats are amazing!



#### Congrats on deciding to expand your furry family!

An introduction process is needed to ensure your resident dog accepts their new kitty. To start, keeping your newbie cat separated from the resident dog will give a good start to their relationship that will ensure they are tolerant of one another, or may even become besties! You will have varying degrees of tolerance and friendship depending on the breed, temperament, and socialization history for the cat and the dog. Remember to go slowly and read your cat and dog's behaviors to go at their pace.

### 1 HOME PREP and SAFE SPACE for your new kitty

#### Create spaces where your cat and dog feel safe and comfortable



- Set up a small bedroom or bathroom that has a door as the new kitty's safe space and base camp. Make sure the room that separates them has a solid sturdy door between. Add a baby gate to the doorway between their safe spaces to avoid any unintended interactions.
- The cat's room should have all the basics - litter boxes, fresh water and food, cat towers, soft beds, and "good" places to hide where you can still get access to them. Block "bad" places to hide like under the bed, dressers, and other tight spots where you cannot see or interact with the new kitty.
- Bring toys, treats, and attention as they settle into their new space. Keep the new cat completely separate and in their safe zone with only human interaction for one day. If the kitty is nervous or fearful, keep them separate longer until they feel comfortable in their safe space. They show comfort and feel secure by seeking attention, playing, resting comfortably, and having relaxed body language.
- The rest of the house can remain your resident dog's base camp, making sure to have the same basics and enrichment items for them as well.

### 2 SCENT Stage

#### Cats and dogs communicate most with their noses, so this step is important to do well!



- Place a towel in the favorite bed or resting spot for each animal. Place a yummy treat or their favorite toy on the scented item so they have something good at the same time they smell the other animal. After they have rested on it for one day, it will have their scent on the towel. The next day, swap the towels so the cat gets the dog's towel, and the dog gets the cat's towel. Make sure to continue adding treats and toys with the scented item. Do this every day for a week. That is usually enough time, but consider each animal's uniqueness to guide the timing. Take more time if either one has signs of fear, anxiety, or stress.



#### Some things to watch for are:

##### WARNING SIGNS for CATS:

Hissing, Growling, Arched back, Crouching, Lunging, Tail tucked, Ears pinned back, Wide eyes, Hiding

##### WARNING SIGNS for DOGS:

Growling, Tail tucked, Ears pinned back, Lunging, Looking away, Raising a paw, Lip licking, Yawning

- Do "space swap" with giving each animal the other's territory. Make sure to NOT LET THEM SEE each other as you swap spaces. Use a carrier to keep your cat hidden from the dog as you swap spaces.
- Keep Feliway diffusers in multiple locations in the house to add "feel good" pheromones for your cat.
- If there are no warning signs after a day or two, go to the next step. If there are any anxiety or other adverse reactions don't be afraid to slow down or back up a step. Going slowly now will ensure you set up your cat and your dog to have a good relationship!

# PLAN INTRODUCTIONS

## Dog to Cat Introduction

### 3 HEARING Stage - FOOD / TREAT / PLAY (Still NO SIGHT)

Add "good memories" with treats, play, and other fun things while still separated



- After the cat and dog are comfortable with each other's scents and space swapping, start feeding their meals on opposite sides of the closed door. They should still NOT see each other, but simply enjoy their meal or treat while being able to SMELL one another with the door as the barrier.
- With the door closed, stay with the cat while your helper stays with the dog - each on one side of the closed door. One person plays with the cat, the other person helping plays with the dog. Make sure the other animal hears the other's toys making noise, running, or meowing or barking as part of the session. Make sure to watch for any warning signs and stop any sessions if they occur. Start again after the cat and dog are both calm. Five minutes is enough time for a normal play session. Try to do two sessions each day - more if possible. Do this for a day or two.
- If they don't have any fearful or stressed reactions, do this same session the next day with the door open, baby gate still in place, and a towel draped over the baby gate. We still do not want them to see one another yet. This will be a more intense session where they can hear each other clearly and smell one another as they play. Use treats to reward the cat and the dog individually for being fun play partners and remaining calm. Do this for another day or two.
- Add playtime with toys, catnip, and other fun things for each - still separated by the door.
- Continue space and scent swapping, and make sure they still do not see one another yet.
- This is where patience is your friend! Go slowly to set this foundation properly.

### 4 SIGHT Stage

Great work - your kitty and dog are calm and comfortable so it is time for the next step!



- Now that they remain calm, the next day you will start allowing the cat and the dog to see each other. Open the door a small amount. Slowly move the towel so you reveal about ¼ of the baby gate where they can now begin to see each other. You can have more play sessions like this, and also give them yummy meals on their respective sides of the baby gate. Still keep them 2-4 feet away from one another at first, slowly allowing them to investigate each other over the next day or two. Try to do at least two sessions pulling more of the towel back so they see more each time. Do more sessions as needed.
- Continue to "swap spaces" at this point, where you allow the dog to go into the cat's room and allow the cat and dog to explore the rest of the house. This will help a lot as you open up the whole house to your new kitty!
- Have toys to distract them and blankets to use as barriers if any anxious or aggressive behaviors start.

### 5 HANGING in the same space

Now your kitty and dog are starting to become pals, so let's expand their time together!



- Now that your cat and dog are doing well with the separation, it is time to let them do the same play sessions and meals in the same space. It is best to do this in the area outside the cat's safe space. Make sure you bring some of their favorite things into that room so they feel secure with familiar things. This could be their favorite cat tower, their bed, blanket, and toys. The cat should feel like they have an escape route where they can retreat if they get scared. Keep the dog on a leash to start in case they get overexcited. Share short times together - 10 or 15 minutes to start, gradually increasing time.
- Use toys and playtime, attention, treats, and meals to keep each kitty focused on fun, happy things!
- Supervise their interactions until there is no need for distractions and they comfortably can hang out with each other for more time. Next, try sessions with the dog off leash, and do longer sessions.



# PLAN INTRODUCTIONS

## Dog to Cat Introduction

### 6 OPEN PLAYTIME and LIVING

**Buddy time can now be more open and move to unsupervised**



- This is the last step, so as soon as you see them both relaxed and calm together you can build up to letting them hang out unsupervised. The sooner they get used to one another, the sooner they can all roam freely in your house. Build up slowly to allow them to hang out with each other for 1/2 days with minimal supervision.
- The next step is having their first overnight together. Be prepared to intervene if anything happens, but if they have reached this stage and everyone is doing well and I would not expect any big issues.
- Kitties and dogs have bad days just like us, so there may be times in the future when issues arise.

### If things happen, be prepared and remember it's a marathon, not a sprint!

- ♥ Each kitty and dog has a distinct personality. It is important to recognize their individuality and be able to read their behaviors, vocalizations, and body language.
- ♥ Be prepared to STOP sessions if tensions get too high, or the cat or dog become scared or overstimulated. A soft blanket is good to have on hand to scoop up a kitty or drape over them to create a barrier between a cat and a dog, and gives you a way to safely separate them if things get tense.
- ♥ Be patient! If you go too quickly and you lose progress, don't fret. Simply take a step back and start over when the cat and dog are calm, or the next day.
- ♥ This process is never linear, so going forward and backward is expected. Stay upbeat - kitties and dogs can sense your tension too! Use positive reinforcement and create happy associations through treats, play, and attention to always end on a positive note to build good memories!

### 🕒 GENERAL TIMELINE EXAMPLE

**Remember - every cat and dog has their own personality and history. They will let you know how they are feeling with their actions and body language.**

**Have patience, and go at their pace!**

- 🐾 **DAY 1:** keep kitty in their separate safe space and only have human interaction. Keep the dog away from the other side of the door for the first 24 hours so kitty can get used to their new environment and you. Make sure to have a few towels and blankets in the kitty's space that they rest or sleep on. This will deposit the kitty's scent on the towels. Do the same separately with the dog. This is the first step to prepare for the introduction with scent-sharing!
- 🐾 **DAY 2 - 3:** Swap towels with the dog and the cat. Do this for a day or two. Move slower or more quickly as the kitty and dog allow. Read their behaviors and look for warning signs. Do a space swap.
- 🐾 **DAY 4 - 5:** Hearing stage - With the door closed, allow the cat and dog to hear one another from the other side as they play and have yummy tasty meals. After they remain calm for this activity, do the same playing and having tasty meals but now with the door open, baby gate in place, and a towel over the baby gate.
- 🐾 **DAY 6:** Sight stage - With the door open, pull the towel back over a few play sessions to reveal the cat to the dog for the first time. Next, have tasty meals and treats on each side of the baby gate. Continue space swap.
- 🐾 **DAY 7+:** Remove the baby gate and play in the same space. Have a helper keep the dog in a harness to be prepared for any overexcitement. Do longer sessions over the course of the next few days, or as they allow. Build up to longer sessions, and unsupervised play. Once all is calm, allow them access to the whole house!

# ROUTINES

Kitties are creatures of habit and very much enjoy consistency in their world. Out there in the wild, changes in routine could mean they are in danger of being ambushed, or that their prey is escaping them. When you understand their innate motivations, you can unlock the secret to a purr-fectly harmonious relationship with your kitty!

**1 Make meals standard:** Sticking to a set timeframe for kitty's meals not only meets their physical needs, but also nurtures their psychological desire for predictability. A dependable routine will make kitty feel secure and loved, fortifying the incredible bond you share.

**2 Clean the litter box consistently:** Cats are cleanliness fanatics, especially when it comes to their personal bathroom spaces. A great way to show kitty you love them and care for them is by keeping the litter box pristine. Scoop litter at least once daily and more as needed. Change clay litter out completely once weekly, and clumping litter every 2-3 weeks. Before adding new litter for the complete change, wash the empty boxes in hot water with mild dish soap. Use a 1:32 bleach + water spray to disinfect. This simple act of cleaning consistently will build trust with kitty and create a strong connection between you!

**3 Playtime plans:** Because kitties love routine, they will also appreciate playtime that happens at the same times each day. Try to schedule a 10-30 minute play session at least twice a day, and more if you have a younger cat or kitten, or a highly active kitty. Cats and kittens need to spend their energy in good ways, and play is the best way to do this. It will help them to predict what happens next and ease stress and anxiety of constantly changing schedules.

**4 Cuddle sessions:** Yes, even the predictability of when kitty gets to spend lap time with you can help give them a strong sense of security and safety. If your routine involves morning coffee, invite kitty to hop up on your lap and enjoy pets while you have your cup of joe. If your nighttime or weekend schedule has a binge sesh of streaming movies or shows, create a space for kitty to snuggle with you while you nestle in for the day or night. Having a reliable routine can enhance your cat's sense of security and elevate your bond to incredible new heights.

**5 Share the joy of a secure and comforting environment:** There are some remarkable benefits of providing a consistent, secure environment for your kitty - not just for kitty, but also for you! When your fur baby feels safe and secure, they're more likely to show their true colors by being playful, affectionate, and relaxed. Consistency is the secret sauce to reducing stress and anxiety, and this is a foundational construct for their overall well-being. It will also help to deter any unwanted behaviors if kitty is feeling happy and satisfied, they will not feel the need to do anything uncharacteristic. This helps you to feel great about the relationship and enjoy all the good things having a kitty in your life has to offer - hello slow blinks and biscuit making! Most importantly, it builds a strong foundation of trust and understanding, fostering clearer communication between you and kitty. It also deepens your connection and lowers stress and anxiety for you too! Consistency is not magic, and it does require planning and attention to reading kitty's behaviors, but the benefits are wonderful. This helps you have a more fulfilling, joyful relationship with your fur baby. As you embrace the power of routine, this sets you and kitty up for an amazing journey together!

