



Cat Care 101 – a guide for new cat parents and caretakers

1. Feed the best quality wet cat food you can afford.
 - a. A typical adult cat will need 3oz, twice a day. Larger cats and convalescing cats will need more. Kittens and adolescents can eat as much as they want; they are growing quickly.
 - b. Wet food is preferable to dry because it has more moisture, fewer carbs, and generally higher quality protein.
 - c. Dog food is NOT suitable for cats!
2. Make sure your cat always has clean, fresh water available. Change the water at least once a day (twice is even better), and wash the bowl with warm, soapy water and rinse well.
3. Food and water bowls
 - a. Should be stainless steel. Plastic bowls can lead to feline acne.
 - b. Food bowls should be shallow because that's easier on the cat's whiskers.
4. Litter box
 - a. Put the litter box in a low-traffic location that is easy for your cat to access.
 - b. Scoop the litter box at least once a day. Completely change the litter and wash the litter box as necessary.
 - c. Most cats prefer clay litter. Most cats prefer unscented litter. You can let your cat show you their preference by putting two or three litter boxes with different types of litter next to each other.
 - d. For kittens please refer to the Cat Safety Essentials handout. Clumping litter can be deadly for small kittens. Use natural pine or unscented clay litter for kittens under 4-5 months old.
 - e. Some cats will only use an open litter box. Many cats do not like enclosed top-entry litter boxes, while some others don't mind it.
5. Make sure your cat is spayed or neutered.
6. Never declaw your cat. In fact it is illegal to do so in NY state and rightly so – because declawing is a cruel & mutilating procedure which is traumatizing for cats and they suffer physically and psychologically for years after they have this procedure.
7. You generally do not need to bathe your cat. They are self-cleaning animals! In exceptional circumstances if you do have to clean your cat please refer to our Cat Safety Essentials handout.
8. Have a safe environment for the cat. Please refer to our Cat Safety handout.
9. Have a sturdy, secure cat carrier – not cardboard.
10. If you have a long-hair cat, brush regularly to prevent matting.
11. Provide scratching posts
 - a. Some cats prefer vertical scratching posts. One that is tall enough for your cat to stand up and stretch on is ideal.
 - b. Some cats prefer horizontal scratchers. Many horizontal scratchers are available at different price points.
12. Provide safe cat toys to enrich your cat's environment.
13. Provide a hiding place. Many cats are happy with an open carrier or a cardboard box.
14. Provide a cat tree if practical. Most cats like to climb and to hang out in high places.



Image: For Animals, Inc. adoptee - polydactyl cat Lily