



Siamese Oriental and Snowshoe Cat Rescue

ADOPTION MANUAL

Dear <<ownername>>,

It's so important to get started on the right foot when adopting a kitten or cat. Please take the time to read this before your call with Dee, our Executive Director or one of our other team members. If you have any questions, that would be the time to ask them as we want this to be a great experience for you, whether you are a first time adopter or an experienced adopter.

Secondly, please make a \$50 donation with is non-refundable. If you are adopting multiple cats or known purebred cat this may double or might change. This will put you on our approved adopters list which is good for one year from the date of your donation. \$50 will be deducted from your adoption fee. We use this to support the cost of our administrative tools, software, websites, and food/supplies for fosters.

We'll send you the donation request via a separate email and want to thank you for helping our organization.

The name of the cat/kitten you would like to reserve is **(Name of cat/kitten here)**

Fees for kitties:

Domestic Shorthair kittens: \$150 - \$175

Seniors (7 and older) \$100

Blue-eyed and Fluffy cats and kittens: \$375

Lilac Point: \$250

Blue Point: \$250

Seal Point: \$250

Chocolate Point: \$250

Maine Coon mixes: \$250

Known Maine Coon/Ragdoll Purebreds \$750

Ragdoll mixes: \$300- \$350

Pure Bred Bengals: \$600

Bengal mixes: \$350 - \$450

Turkish Angora: \$350

INSTRUCTIONS ON SETTLING YOUR CAT INTO ITS NEW HOME

THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT: PLEASE READ AND FOLLOW THESE INSTRUCTIONS!

Your new pet should be confined at first to a separate, closed off room in your home (a.k.a.Safe Room).To avoid the risk of bolting and hiding, do not open the travel crate until you are in the Safe Room with the door closed. The Safe Room should have food, water, litter, a scratching post, toys and a comfortable place to sleep, and ideally a window to look out of. (Please see later in this manual for guidance of what and how to feed your cat, and what litter we recommend). If you are using a spare bedroom we encourage you to close off under the bed spaces with cardboard to avoid having a tug of war to get your new friend out. Too stressful for all.

We may also send you a list of recommended products to help your cat to adapt. Any litter boxes, bowls, crates, bedding, etc. that has previously been used by another cat(s) should be thoroughly cleaned before use. Every member of the family should understand the importance of security by keeping external doors and windows shut, especially during the first few weeks when the kitten or cat is settling into its new home and is at increased risk of escaping and getting lost.

If you have other pets: Your new cat should remain in the Safe Room for at least the first FIVE weeks. This is also bonding time for them to learn to love and trust you and for you to learn all about them. Please watch and follow the steps set out in the very useful Jackson Galaxy - Building the Bond

If at all possible, the safe room shouldn't have a bed with space underneath to bolt or hide under. Kittens and cats with no history of hiding may hide in a new environment where the sights, sounds and smells are all entirely new.

This minimum quarantine period serves three purposes:

It allows your new cat and existing pets to adjust to your home and each others' smells -this helps to minimize aggression and enhance bonding when they do, eventually, meet; and

It also serves as a precaution to ensure that any communicable illness that that your new or existing cat is carrying and was not apparent at the time of arrival runs its course without getting passed on to the other(s).

It allows you to have precious bonding time with your new pet. While you may be totally in love with your new companion, they may need time and space to learn to love and trust you.

The Jackson Galaxy steps require that you start by feeding the cats on either side of the Safe Room door, and if all goes well, gradually opening the door a little more each day. This also works with treats. It will help if you try to establish a basic routine, by feeding, tending to and playing with the cat in the Safe Room at roughly the same times each day. You can add to this on days when you have more time, like on weekends, but establishing the core minimum routine helps the cat to feel safe because they quickly learn that you will be back for example later that evening or the next morning with food and company. The in the safe room period is FIVE weeks. This allows you to bond with your new pet without the daily distractions and for THEM to learn to love and trust you. When we see issues after kitties go home it is nearly ALWAYS because this process was not followed, even when THERE ARE NO OTHER PETS IN YOUR HOME. Anxious pets will express their emotions by peeing on things outside the litter box. It is best to avoid this by following the instructions. We feel so strongly about this that it is in our adoption contract which is a legally binding agreement.

Do NOT, on any account, shut your existing cat(s) out of what to them are socially important areas for more than a short time - such as your bed at night or a home office during the day - and allow the new cat(s) to occupy this space for a lengthy period during the day or night. Doing so will only cause your existing cat(s) to become extremely jealous and make it much harder for them to accept the newcomer(s).

Starting from the first week, it will help if you switch around the new cat bedding and the existing cat bedding. We encourage you to take some sweaty laundry and rub it all over each member of your family (Human and four legged) so that those scents are blended together. Allow your new pet and your current pets to learn each others' scents before the actually meet.

For adoptive families in the state of Texas: This year has been a great deal more humid than most. Please obtain an anti-fungal shampoo that has Chlorhexidine, such as Cureseb, or Selsun Blue, and shampoo your kitten at least monthly for the first few months. Be sure to towel them completely dry and snuggle them till their body temperature stabilizes and they feel warm again.

There are many kinds of fungi the thrive in hot and humid temperatures. They can live for many months on surfaces, including skin. Monthly shampooing will reduce the risk of them growing. Simply treat and wash your own hands frequently. Humans often carry skin fungi on their skin as well. So frequent hand washing by all who interact with your kitty is important.

After the first week, if there is purring rather than growling on both sides of the Safe Room door, it can help if you swap "territories" for an hour or so, and allow the newcomer(s) out into the rest of your home and put the existing cat(s) (and any dogs that live indoors) in the Safe Room. When you do this, be sure to shut your existing cat(s) into a room that the new cat cannot enter, before letting the new cat out. It is very tempting to let them meet and see how they do, and hope they "make friends", but patience really pays off. They should not be face to face until the Jackson Galaxy steps allow it.

A lot of folks are tempted to rush the process because it feels "mean" and the cat wants to come out. It is important to remember that cats are cats and they think like cats. They enjoy safety, comfort and routine.

One of the areas where we create problems is when we, as humans, put our perspectives, thoughts, ideas and perceptions onto our pets. What for us is a small dark box that is claustrophobic is for them as great, safe space where nothing can get to them to cause harm.

The Safe Room provides all of those things and your new cat does not mind being in there nearly as much as you think. Once they get used to it, they will not mind. Sure, they may want to come out and explore, or spend time with you, but it does not mean they are desperately unhappy in the Safe Room. The Safe Room becomes their "base camp" or little kitty "headquarters". Once they have roaming privileges later on, it becomes the place they will want to retreat to if overwhelmed or spooked in the early weeks.

Rushing the process can end up backfiring and your pets getting off on the wrong foot. Cats have long memories and it will go faster if you are disciplined and do it right the first time. By all means, spend time with the new cat in the Safe Room; you can even spend the night (or part of the night) in there sometimes - not too much, though, or your existing cats will become very jealous. Splitting your time between existing and new cats is a little more challenging if you live

alone, but it can be done!

It is highly unusual for the Jackson Galaxy slow introduction process not to work if done properly and for the correct amount of time- (FIVE weeks). However, we know there are sometimes exceptions to this. Please do consult with us if your cats are not responding in the manner hoped. In some rare cases, it is necessary to put the new cat in a wire dog crate for a while in a socially important area, like a living room or bedroom, until the cats can get used to each other without making things worse by fighting.

Even if you do not have other pets:

A cat may hide at first if turned out loose into your home. Putting him or her into a smaller space at first will help him or her to feel safe and speed up the bonding process with you. You should keep the cat in the Safe Room until he or she comes towards you when you enter and does not hide. Approaching them on their level is best. Predators approach from high. Having everything the cat needs in the Safe Room, without the cat needing to go and find it, helps ease any anxiety he or she may be feeling.

You may be given additional instructions:

If you are adopting a cat that is likely to be especially sensitive to change or need additional time to bond with new people (such as a former feral cat or victim of abuse), you will be instructed to crate the cat in the Safe Room until he or she allows petting and does not retreat from handling, and then gradually expand the cat's territory over a period of weeks. If you do not have a crate, we will send you links to options available to buy ahead of time.

We may provide you with additional specific instructions for more timid cats, kittens, cats that have recently undergone spay or neuter surgery, or senior cats and these should be followed. When we name cats, we endeavor to give them names that will be as universally popular as possible and reduce the likelihood that an adopter will want to make a name change. Under no circumstances should you immediately change a cat's name when it comes home. It is stressful and causes anxiety. A cat that has not had its name very long (such as a kitten or a cat we recently named) can usually handle a name change without too much difficulty, BUT NOT IMMEDIATELY.

However, it is not recommended to try to change a cat's name if he or she has had it for a long time, or if he or she was formerly feral or semi feral learned that name during the process of learning how to trust humans - at least not until the cat has settled into your home. Changing a cat's name in those circumstances is likely to delay the integration process and we cannot be held responsible for the consequences.

Food, litter and health:

On occasion, a cat may suffer a bit of an upset stomach or feline asthma which will usually be down to stress and/or disruptions in diet or feeding or litter box patterns. Please note that for a smooth transition and a happy and healthy cat, we strongly recommend that you follow our recommendations as to what to feed your cat or kitten and what litter to use, that you continue to use the same as your cat or kitten was previously used to for at least a transitional period, and introduce any new food or litter system gradually.

Currently our adoption contract requires new families to feed young kittens Royal Canin mom & baby, both wet and dry to age six months, then Royal Canin Kitten both wet and dry until 12 months.

Although this is generally nothing to worry about, and an adult cat will settle after a few days, a kitten will need to be watched carefully as they can dehydrate quickly and can reach a critical condition within hours. We recommend daily weight for the first few weeks for any kitten under 4 months. If a kitten stops eating or appetite quickly diminishes OR THEY LOOSE weight? Reach out IMMEDIATELY to your SOS contact to discuss next steps

If you are at all concerned, you should ensure your kitten has enough fluids (by syringe feeding if necessary) and an immediate visit to the vet will be essential to ensure your cat or kitten's wellbeing.

With kittens under five pounds, we encourage you to obtain a food scale with a plastic top that your kitten can sit in while being weighed. Weighing should be done every day if under 3.5 pounds. If there is a significant drop please reach out to us to confirm what steps to take next.

Unless specified otherwise (e.g. our cats were in an off-site foster home or have special dietary needs), our cats and kittens all eat wet and dry food and will be used to the food, water and litter arrangements set out below. In the case of kittens, they will never have known anything else. The fewer changes in the initial weeks, the better for them.

Food

Wet food must be provided for your cat at least twice a day for their entire lives! A diet of only dry food shortens cats lives and increases the risks of kidney disease and death, as well as bladder crystals. Wet food only is the best choice, except for kittens under six months old who should have dry food available to prevent Fading Kitten Syndrome (a condition where their blood sugar and body temperature drop suddenly, leading to death.)

Wet food:

Royal Canin mom & baby wet, twice a day, with 1/3 cup of water mixed in like a thick gravy. Royal Canin Kitten wet and dry till one year old. They are used to wet food early each morning. If there is wet food left over you are putting out too much. If there isn't any, add a little bit.

Dry food:

For dry food we mix/rotate Royal Canin mom & baby both wet and dry, and Royal Canin Kitten wet and dry. (kittens and cats over 6 months get the kitten formula version). Open Farm, Royal Canin kitten, and Mother Earth as well as Applaws, Orijen, Acana, Yarrah and Meowing Heads are also good brands - we can send you a list of approved brands if you wish. Nulo and Iams are also reasonable foods for kitties over one year old.

These are good quality foods. One of our main fosters lost 2 cats to poisoning from Purina so rarely use it except Royal Canin Pro has been reasonably okay for the last three years. We encourage you to research cat nutrition before switching to another brand. Many cheaper (and some not so cheap) brands are full of cheap fillers like corn and other

grains. Not only are these bad for their teeth, the animal protein they contain is from very questionable and poor quality sources.

Things like feather meal, bone meal and slaughterhouse floor scraps; there are also questions as to what happens to the millions of bodies of euthanized cats and dogs that are sold to rendering plants by shelters around the US. The supply chains are not transparent. In some cases it goes overseas only to return in our pet food. Apart from being morally reprehensible to feed a dead pet to another pet, their bodies contain the euthanasia drug and numerous cheap cat and dog foods have been found to contain traces of the same drug, which over time will give your cat kidney or liver problems. The ingredients in the food should be clearly labeled and contain actual muscle meat as the second or third ingredient.

The science of kitten nutrition used to promote grain free foods. In recent years that has changed and it has shown to have no real benefit and may have negative and adverse effects.

Please, do your homework if you don't want to use our research! We are happy to discuss any further questions you have about cat food with you.

Complete versus complementary foods

Please be careful when buying wet food. Some wet foods are supplementary/ complementary foods. They are not formulated as "complete foods". This does not mean they are bad, or unhealthy. Think of them the way you would if you gave your cat some fresh organic chicken breast or a sardine. They are healthy, but they are a supplement to the cat's diet - they may not contain everything your cat needs on a long term basis.

Some of the highest quality wet foods are in this category and contain pure meat/fish, some beneficial vegetable like pumpkin or seaweed, and some contain rice. This is fine if your cat also has access to a complete wet or dry food daily.

Do not, on any account, feed your cat on a diet of complementary food or home made food .

Cats need certain nutrients and without it, will suffer health consequences. Cats and dogs famously went blind and died of heart failure in the late 20th century due to being fed manufactured food made from offal and grain, without muscle meat. They were deficient in the essential nutrient taurine, which can only be found in muscle meat. Modern pet food manufacturers know this and will add taurine to the formulation. Whilst finding this in its natural form in fresh high-quality meat is the most beneficial, unless you have the knowledge of a cat nutritionist or the time to get up to speed, then it's safest to rely on a formulated complete food that is high quality and to supplement with fresh meats and/or high quality canned complementary wet foods.

Raw food diets

Many folks swear by the raw diet. At this time we do not recommend raw food of any kind due to Bird Flu (H5N1)

People food

Many cats love to join their human family's meals and will beg or even steal from the plate. This can be wonderful, if you allow it, and helps your cat to feel like part of the family. We have had cats that will stick their noses in a bowl of split pea soup when nobody is looking and lap away. Please just be careful not to feed your cat harmful ingredients.

While Fluffy might adore some of the Sunday pot roast, her digestive system will NOT appreciate onions or garlic.

In fact, onions and garlic can be toxic and even fatal to cats. Cats are smarter than dogs when it comes to not eating foods that are bad for them, but even they can get confused when it is cooked together with something they like. Salt is also very bad for cats due to their small size, but they usually love salty things. Before allowing your cat to share family meals, please check what "people foods" cats can safely eat.

Supplements:

Three times a week we add a tsp of organic Salmon oil to wet food. The oil helps keep their fur soft and glossy, provides an extra source of fat soluble vitamins and minerals, and reduces risk of dry skin.

They would benefit from hemp oil (we use Hemp oil 700) in wet food 2x a day until fully settled in. Hemp oil has many benefits for cats: as well as relaxing them, it is great for joint mobility and arthritis in older animals.

We give several small cubes of organic chicken breast 2 to 3 times a week, either raw or seared or boiled lightly. This gives them essential nutrients that are destroyed in manufacturing.

We feed a little oily fish once a week. Please consider researching the importance of keeping a good balance of Omega 3 essential fatty acids, to balance a diet that tends to be heavy in Omega 6. An imbalance leads to inflammation and a poor immune system and can increase the risk of obesity and a shortened lifespan. Omega 3 fats are also very good for the heart, reducing the risk that your kitty will develop heart disease. Tuna is often the oily fish of choice amongst cat owners, because cats love the taste. Tuna is ok in moderation, but the problem is pollution and contamination in the oceans and the fact that your cat can slowly be poisoned by this. We prefer sardine, mackerel and herring. This is because tuna fish are high up in the marine food chain and more susceptible to pollution and long term build up of toxins in the tuna fish's fat and this can lead to long term toxin build up in your cat's liver.

Sardines, mackerel and herring are also oily fish but they are much lower in the marine food chain and should be relatively free of pollutants.

Oily canned fish should be the kind that comes in spring water or brine (with the brine rinsed off- too much salt is bad for your cat). Please do not buy the kind in sunflower oil, because sunflower oil is full of Omega 6 oils and with the oily fish you are trying to balance their essential fatty acids by giving them Omega 3. Most of the rest of their diet (e.g. chicken) will have a lot of Omega 6 fats in it already. You can cook oily fish with short grain rice as a supplementary food, or Applaws and Thrive make a version of this with mackerel and sardines.

For male cats especially, a little apple cider vinegar mixed in with their fish is very helpful to help eliminate crystals in the urine and helps prevent cystitis (which can onset very quickly and be fatal if not treated immediately with the right antibiotics).

Dee's husband gives them a little sour cream as a treat when he uses it, along with mayonnaise in their oily fish (mackerel, sardine, herring, tuna) occasionally.

For cats that enjoy it, malt paste is excellent for eliminating hairballs and providing healthy nutrients.

Plaque Off (or similar products) added to dry or wet food can really reduce plaque and tartar buildup and delay those dreaded and expensive "scale and polish" appointments. It is made from seaweed and definitely works!

Drinking Bowls and Water Fountains

We use only steel or ceramic bowls which go in our dishwasher daily. Some cats can develop acne from using plastic bowls. Water fountains that are ceramic or metal with more than one level of dropping water are critical to hydration for kitties. Dehydration leads to many health problems, including kidney disease, kidney failure, bladder crystals and even death.

Our cats are used to drinking from a ceramic water fountain with multiple levels of water dropping. We really encourage you to obtain a water fountain to increase water consumption, which reduces the risk of kidney disease as they grow older. Siamese cats are especially prone to kidney problems. We use distilled or filtered water in the ceramic fountain, along with a tsp of apple cider vinegar to reduce risks of bladder stones and urinary tract infections. Cleaning once a week is sufficient, and avoids bacteria and slime build up.

THIMEROSAL in vaccines:

Thimerosal is a form of mercury in many vaccines for both cats and dogs that is used to extend the shelf life.

In 2020 we lost EIGHT cats in their forever homes who went for their vaccine boosters. They died within a few hours, often in the veterinarian's office despite all their best efforts.

This caused us to research and thus we learned about Thimerosal. Many vets are unaware of this, or "poo poo" it as "anti vaxxer nonsense". It isn't. There is science based evidence that some cats, particularly those who are blue eyed and/or fluffy, and Purebreds (Maine Coons, Ragdoll, Balinese, Burmese, Persians, Himalayan's, etc) react badly to it. In May, 2024 one of our adopters lost another. ALL vaccines can be obtained without this ingredient and many experienced cat veterinarians are Thimerosal free.

If your vet says its more expensive to provide Thimerosal free vaccines they are being less than honest. They pay far less than our Rescue does. All our vaccines given are Thimerosal free.

Please have a conversation with your vet. Ask to read the vials EACH time your pet is receiving a booster vaccine. Don't allow them to mix it up outside, bring in the room and inject. Not everyone takes it seriously. Our Board of Directors feels so strongly about this that we have added this to our manual and our Director must tell each and every potential adopter about the risk.

Some experienced Veterinary clinics are now Thimerosal free for all pets they treat. Schertz Animal Hospital is one of them.

While we are discussing veterinary care? Most vets these days will insist on retesting for FeLV (feline leukemia), Feline Immune Deficiency and/or Heartworm. Each SOS kitty is tested for all three when they are being spay or neutered.

The clinic we work with conducts HUNDREDS of these tests each month. Having a retest is generally unnecessary and another way to move funds from your pocket to theirs. Our clinic charges \$15 each.

Veterinarians can charge up to and over \$100 each. Most veterinarians receive little training about cat health and nutrition. More is spend on the business of making money and on dogs as generally, people will spend much more money on their dogs than on cats. You will nearly always know more about your can that they do.

Weight Management

Please, do not allow your cat to become overweight. This is usually caused by free feeding an oversupply of dry food. Once a cat becomes obese it can be very difficult to help it lose the weight. Some cats are prone to this and are more interested in food than others. If your cat starts to become chubby, please limit its food intake and increase play time with wand toys, etc.

Slow feeding dishes and food puzzles are a good idea, as is putting food away at night, and there are other things you can do and special feeding dishes you can buy if you have multiple pets to ensure your cat does not eat more than its fair share. Putting a cat on a crash diet can be dangerous, so please ask us if your cat starts to put on weight and you are unsure what to do about it. We are here to help!

Litter and Litter boxes

For litter we really encourage Equine Pine pellets from the Tractor Supply. 40 pound bag is \$5.99. It is available at PetSmart but at triple the price. Reduces risk of asthma, upper respiratory infections, reduces exposure to chemicals, and eliminates risk of bowel obstructions from ingesting clumping litter.

World's Best Litter is made from corn and therefore biodegradable. It is recommended after 8 months as it does have tiny grains which can cause corneal issues in younger kittens.

It also is so much more environmentally friendly by reducing pollution in waters, lakes, and oceans and can even be composted and recycled safely into your yard! Please consider doing your bit for our planet by making environmentally responsible and sustainable pet ownership choices.

Please DO NOT use Pretty Litter or other clay based clumping litters. They can build up in kitties insides causing bowel obstructions and death. There is a lot of information on the internet about these. Any kitten or senior cat will not be able to use a top entry litter box due to difficulty or pain with access. Kittens below 6 months of age should never have clumping litter, because this may cause intestinal blockages which can kill them. Biodegradable litters are healthier and so much safer. In 2024 we lost another kitten to **Pretty Litter**.

If you have more than one cat or kitten, please remember the golden ratio of litter boxes: $N + 1$. N is the number of cats in the home. So if you have 2 cats, you need 3 litter boxes; if you have 3 cats you need 4 litter boxes, and so on. This rule doesn't apply while your new cat or kitten is still in the Safe Room, because the cats are still separated and are not yet sharing the same space during that time. It applies from the moment you allow your existing cat(s) and your new cat/kitten to occupy the same areas of your home.

A lot of behavioral problems (such as urine marking and fights) are caused by an insufficient number of litter boxes for a multi cat household. Having the correct number of litter boxes will help ease the transition and help them

get along. And reduce the risk of peeing outside the litter box.

Most of our kittens are neutered before reaching sexual maturity which removes the hormonal influences from personalities so what we see is only the kittens personality, not based on gender influences. Thus listening to someone because 'they had only 2 males and they always got along' is an outdated myth about cat and kitten behaviors from decades ago when spay and neuter was done at or after six months. Puberty begins at four months. Cats can make and get pregnant then. Juvenile spay/neuter also prevents many major health issues as well as early spraying outside of the litter box..

Catnip, silver vine and valerian Most cats will benefit from being given catnip regularly. For cats that respond to catnip, this sends them into a euphoric state, and they will roll around and will be more active. Many will drool with happiness. Do not worry if your cat does not respond to it. The fresh plant is much more potent than the dried form, so if your cat shows some interest in the dried form, you may wish to purchase a catnip plant. The little extra effort is worth it for the enjoyment the cats will get from a spring of fresh catnip regularly. Also, you will never have to buy any catnip again! Young plants can be bought very cheaply on sites like Amazon and Ebay and can be grown in a pot (buy a large pot, because they grow tall!). They are related to the mint and nettle family and once established, you will never need to buy another because they self seed. They don't tend to do well kept indoors but can be grown on a windowsill or porch or front steps if you do not have a yard. It's best to keep them in a pot unless you have a lot of space, because they will spread! We harvest them regularly, which keeps them under control. If your cat doesn't respond to catnip, don't worry. There is nothing "wrong" with your cat. It is estimated that about one third of all cats do not have the gene that responds to catnip. If this is the case, you might want to try silver vine and/or Valerian root instead. A higher proportion of cats respond to this, and its effects are similar to catnip. The dried silver vine sticks or sachets of dried Valerian root are easy to find for sale online. Valerian is a perennial that is easy to grow from seed in most climate zones. Silver vine plants are harder to come buy and will need a wall to grow on (but can be bought online).

Cat grass Cats naturally want to chew on fresh plants and grasses. New cat owners are often surprised to see that many cats will actually eat grass like rabbits (although not to the same volume). Wild cats do this: it helps with their digestion and helps move things like hair through their intestinal tract.

Sometimes they will do it in order to throw up a hairball. Indoor cats do not have access to grasses and plants, so they will benefit from "cat grass" inside the home. This is basically wheat grass. You can buy the seed very cheaply online and grow it in a pot or dish. There is a cat grass station manufactured by Catit available to buy cheaply online (Amazon sells it) that has a mesh cover over the grass. This helps prevent the cats from being so enthusiastic that the young seedlings get pulled up by their roots. Also, be aware that outdoor grass even from your own yard may be contaminated by worm eggs from wildlife, feral cats and your neighbors' indoor/outdoor pets and you will need to be sure to worm your cats much more frequently. Generally, growing cat grass indoors is the safest most hygienic way for your cat to express natural grass chewing behavior.

Poisonous plants and flowers in your home and yard

Cats will naturally want to chew on plants and grasses in the home and yard - especially if you have not given them their own supply of cat grass (see above). As well as liking to chew on vegetation, cats are curious creatures. With the wrong plants, this leads to tragedy: many cat parents are devastated each year when they inadvertently poison their pet by allowing it to eat a toxic plant. Lilies are especially deadly.

Before your new fur baby comes home, please check all your houseplants to make sure they are non toxic and give away any that are toxic (or confine them to an area of your home that your cat will never be able to access). The same goes for your yard if you plan to allow your cat to have supervised yard access. Even a cat on a leash can eat a toxic plant before you realize it. Anything in the lily, oleander or yew tree family is deadly to cats. This is a non-exhaustive list and you will need to check all your houseplants before allowing them to remain in your home when your cat arrives. It is the Lilly Pollen that kills the fastest.

If someone gives you flowers, check them before allowing them into your home. If the flowers contain anything that is poisonous to your fur baby, then re-gift the bouquet. Do not allow it into your home. Your cat does not even need to chew on it to be poisoned. Lilies are a popular bouquet flower. Even a tiny spec of lily pollen that falls onto the floor and gets picked up on feet or hands will kill your cat if it is ingested!!

If your cat does have contact with something poisonous, do not wait for symptoms to appear because by then it may be too late. Take him or her straight to the vet where they may be able to induce vomiting or pump his or her stomach. Taking swift action will help to save his or her life. The best thing is to prevent the risk of this happening in the first place by being extremely vigilant about what plants and flowers you allow your cats to be around.

ESSENTIAL OILS KILL!!!

If you are using essential oils in diffusers or candles in your home YOU MUST remove them completely and immediately. They can and do kill cats via fast acting pneumonia!!! We recently lost a kitten when it was taken home where they used essential oils to scent their homes.

Flea prevention and removal

Even indoor only cats can catch fleas, although the risk is pretty low if they are not allowed outside. Flea eggs can come inside on shoes, on other pets (like dogs) and if there are fleas the cat/kitten will have worms, so de-worming medications should be given as directed by your family vet or purchased as below. Diatomaceous earth, food grade, will also help greatly in killing fleas and eggs. It can also be given in small amounts in food. Many cats and kittens are killed each year as a result of poisoning from cheap store bought flea and tick treatment e.g. Hartz. If you want to medicate, please only use a flea treatment that is approved by your vet, like Revolution or Broadline.

Revolution Plus is available for about one third the cost of purchasing from your vet. Pets-Megastore.com.au carries it, also carries Profender ALLWORMER which kills all tapeworms and many other worms that Revolution Plus may miss. Worms are always adapting to survive. As they adapt, so much pet owners to keep their pets safe. Revolution Plus also prevents Heartworm in cats which is incurable.

For getting rid of fleas, we prefer the "old school" methods that do not involve any toxic chemicals: A "dust bath" using food grade diatomaceous earth on the cat and his or her bedding and affected carpets works very well. The DE is

brushed through the cat's fur and in those small quantities is harmless if ingested when grooming. It can be safely vacuumed out of carpets and bedding. The DE is simply crushed limestone rock containing and ancient seashells that contain microscopic sharp edges. The sharp edges cut the fleas' exoskeletons and kills them.

For a bad infestation, an actual water bath in the sink using Dawn dish soap works very well, although we appreciate not all cats will be cooperative. The detergent kills the fleas by drying out their exoskeletons. Put a small towel in the bottom of the sink and fill it part way with warm (not hot) water. Fill a bucket with warm water and have a jug handy. Having the towel on the bottom of the sink helps the cat feel more secure and makes it easier to hold him or her in place. Holding the cat down with one hand, over the back of the neck area, wet him or her gently using the jug. You can rub water gently onto the top of the head and the cheeks with your hand. Gently add a small amount of Dawn and lather, rinse and repeat. If you are worried about being bitten you can use a fabric cat muzzle, available on amazon.

Worm prevention and removal

Even indoor only cats will need regular worming. They can pick up parasites from eggs walked into the home on shoes, and from wet food/meat. You may not even know if your cat has worms unless the infestation is severe enough for the worms to be visible in feces. Not all wormer's are created equal. The kind your vet sells will usually work well, but can be expensive. So check with Pets-Megastore.com.au The wormer's for sale cheaply online do not always work well - most do not kill tapeworms or hookworms for example - and some can be toxic in a minority of cases. We recommend Drontal, which is an effective and safe formulation from the UK that also effectively kills tapeworms. It is available online without prescription. Profender ALLWORMER catches almost everything in combination with Revolution PLUS.

Cats are notoriously difficult to give pills to. Many cat parents delay worming routines because it is stressful for all involved - but it is essential and must be done. There are numerous online tutorials on sites like YouTube about this. Generally it is necessary to hold the cat's mouth shut until he or she swallows. Blowing lightly on his or her nose will help her to swallow. You can break the pill in half to make this easier. If pilling is too difficult with your cat, you can also grind up the pill in a pestle and mortar, add a little liquid to make it into a suspension, and then syringe it into the back your cat's mouth. Another way is to add it to a strongly smelling food like tuna fish, but many cats will still smell the wormer and refuse to eat it.

Your cats can also benefit from a natural supplement that makes their digestive system less hospitable to worms: we recommend a formulation called WRM clear, available online. Please also be sure to consult with your vet on regular worming to prevent heart worm and lung worm. This can be fatal to cats if they are not wormed regularly because if they have a heavy heart worm load, worming the cat can kill it when the worms all die at once. Please note SOS has seen an increasing number of veterinarians insisting on expensive blood work before issuing deworming. And insisting that prescriptions can only be purchased from their pharmacy. This is against veterinary codes of conduct and ethics.

Nail trims and scratching posts

Scratching is natural instinctive behavior, which all cats need to do to stay mentally and physically healthy. Some cats prefer to scratch horizontally and others vertically, and some like to do both. In a new home, a cat will look straight away for places to scratch.

We recommend a large, sturdy scratching post that the cat can use when stretched up to its full height and that will not move along the floor when in use. Cat trees can double up as scratching posts if the lower "trunk" section is tall enough. For horizontal scratching, cheap corrugated cardboard ones are available from most pet stores. This will help the cat to display natural behaviors, which will ensure he, or she is happy and does not act out in other ways.

We strongly recommend one set of scratcher per room in your home, if possible, ideally next to any upholstered furniture and in "socially important" areas of your home e.g. next to your couch or armchair. This will minimize the risk that your cat will choose to use your furniture instead. If this does happen, you should cover the furniture immediately in old curtains or decorators' fabric dust sheets, pinned as closely as possible to the upholstered furniture. Place a scratching post and horizontal scratcher next to the furniture. After 2-3 months, you should be able to remove the sheets/curtains and the cat will be in the habit of using the scratcher you have provided for its scratching needs.

Please check our SOC Cat Rescue and Rehoming Wish list on Amazon. We promote wooden cat trees to avoid ongoing health issues since those with canvas can't be effectively disinfected. There are not completely wooden cat trees that are much safer and cheaper. Indoor cats in particular should have their claws trimmed regularly, to avoid ingrown nails as well as to protect the other pets, as well as your skin and your furnishings. When done correctly this does not hurt the cat at all and with experience can be completed in just a few minutes. There are many ways to do this on your own, even with a resistant cat, and we will be happy to give you further advice on this.

Some pet parents prefer to take their cat to a groomer or vet to have its claws trimmed, at least at first until the cat is more comfortable being handled by a new person and especially if the cat is very timid/easily startled or was a former feral, to avoid possible negative associations during the important cat-pet parent bonding period.

Dental

Keep an eye on your cat's teeth and check them regularly for plaque/tartar buildup. Past the age of about 3, cats should have annual scale and polish appointments at the vet. SOS has been seeing veterinarians over age a pet so they can be asking for expensive dental visits sooner. At the best of times determining age in cats who are rescues (except for litters and those born in our care) is a guessing game. We do our best to ensure that the ages on records are as accurate as possible.

Greenies tooth cleaning treats are readily available. IF at all possible we recommend training your kitten to allow teeth brushing as young as possible. That combined with Pet Insurance will help reduce later costs.

You can delay the first dental appointment, and significantly lengthen the time in between dental cleaning, by using Plaque Off (or similar products) in their food, and regular teeth brushing. If you adopted an adult cat, then teeth brushing may have to be something you work up to.

With a kitten you must start the teeth brushing routine early while they are young enough not to question it too much. Keeping on top of your cat's dental health has many benefits. First, it saves you money, delaying and reducing the frequency of dentals by your veterinarian. Second, it keeps your cat healthier for longer and helps reduce the need for expensive dental appointments with a veterinarian.

If your cat is allowed to develop too much tartar on his or her teeth, this leads to gum disease and will result in the cat needing to have teeth extracted and probably also other health problems. Left untreated, gum disease causes many health problems in cats, because the bacteria travels into the cat's bloodstream and can for example cause heart problems. Keeping your cat's teeth clean helps avoid this. Just like humans, some cats naturally have less tartar buildup

and dental problems than others. Male Siamese in particular tend to be prone to dental problems and gum disease, so brushing their teeth, using Plaque Off, and scheduling an annual scale and polish at your vet will help keep them healthy and prolong their lives.

Remember, it will get to the point when your kitty is old that a general anesthetic for teeth cleaning is simply too high risk. If he or she is used to teeth brushing and/or Plaque Off in his or her food by that point, you should not have to worry as much.

General

Cats - especially Siamese - will usually want to climb, exploring your home vertically. If you want a pet that will stay on the floor, then you should be adopting a dog! You can help to channel these instincts for heights by giving them cat trees and shelves to climb and sit on - this is especially important if you have existing cats, dogs or small children because cats feel safer up high.

This fits more generally into what Jackson Galaxy calls "catification" of the home. You can watch his videos and read many resources on his website. If you provide enough alternative incentives for your cat to WANT to do something else, they are less likely to do the things you would prefer they didn't, because what you provide is more interesting to them. Cats won't do anything they don't already want to do. Scratching posts (dealt with above) are just one example of this. However, please remember you are sharing your home with another creature and they will naturally want to explore, this is normal for happy healthy cats and no amount of incentives or training will work for 100% of cats 100% of the time. If something really is out of bounds, then make it inaccessible or reconsider your decision to adopt a cat.

In a worst case scenario, you can try double sided sticky tape designed to discourage cats from the surface, or the cat! device, that gives out a jet of air and makes a hissing sound if the cat gets close to it.

On our Amazon wish list are several all wooden cat trees that we highly recommend. Go to

<https://www.siameseorientalsnowshoerescue.org>, click on donate, then find the Amazon icon. Under that is a link that says SHOP. Click on that to go to our wish list which contains many items we encourage as good, as safe as possible, and valuable to the long term wellness of your new companion.

UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD YOU EVER ATTEMPT TO "DISCIPLINE" YOUR CAT BY SHOUTING AT THEM, OR USING A PHYSICAL PUNISHMENT, SUCH AS A WATER SPRAY BOTTLE OR A SMACK!

Trying to train your cat this way does not work and these methods have been discredited by all feline behaviorists. It is unkind, and will just make your cat afraid of you at a time when you are trying to bond. All it does is teach the cat to carry on with the behavior when you are not present.

If you have, or may in the future have, small or special needs children:

Huge numbers of cats are abandoned and surrendered annually because a terrorized and frustrated cat bit or scratched a child. This is the fault of the people in the home, not the cat. Once this cycle starts it is harder to stop than it is to prevent in the first place. Toddlers especially need to be supervised with pets until they have learned to handle them appropriately.

Your new cat will need plenty of escape opportunities from excitable or fractious children, for example shelving, tall cat activity centers/scratching posts, tops of cupboards or wardrobes, cardboard boxes and under beds. Now is the time to build on existing education you have given your children prior to the cat arriving about how to be gentle around cats and how to hold a cat appropriately, for example cats need support under the front and hind legs.

Children should only pick up cats that are tolerant of being picked up and only if they are strong enough to support all the cat's weight. For young children, this should always be supervised. This will prevent the cat having unpleasant and stressful encounters with children as it is trying to settle in to the home. It will also help safeguard against any bites or scratches that may occur if the child pushes things too far with the cat before the cat feels totally comfortable around them. Regular picking up of cats should be limited to kittens or very sociable and tolerant adult cats that actively enjoy this.

The temptation for a small child is often to squeal with excitement, chase and grab so the need for escape strategies is essential. Many small children treat cats and kittens like toys, which they are not. Baby gates preventing toddlers from climbing stairs or preventing movement from room to room are a great asset to the cat under these circumstances and many will seek refuge upstairs or in another room. They allow the cat to feel control over its environment by being able to leave and not be followed and this alone can greatly help a cat settle into a busy family environment. Furthermore, it is very important, especially with young children, that there is at least one room that the cat can retreat to as a 'safe place' within the house. This is an area that the children cannot access and the cat can go if it feels too overwhelmed. Further resources are available here:

<https://icatcare.org/advice/introduce-cats-and-children>

<https://www.catbehaviorassociates.com/cats-and-children-10-things-every-parent-should-know/>

Please remember!

Every cat and kitten will have its own personality and likes and dislikes. Some cats settle into their new surroundings very quickly and with ease, while others may not be as confident with change and take longer. Cats with Siamese heritage are notoriously prone to being very sensitive to change and some cats that were very confident when "bonded"; to their previous owners or their foster parents appear very timid at first in a new home and surroundings until they can re-bond with "their" new people. Sometimes, it will take a cat longer to settle in its new home than it did in its foster home because, from its perspective, it has only just gone through the process of adjusting to a new home only to have to do it all over again.

During this settling-in time, both during and after its confinement to the Safe Room, it is important that you allow your cat to take things at their own pace as they get used to the new people in their lives, the sights, smells and any other pets you may have. What takes one cat a few hours may take another cat several weeks, or longer. This is not always possible for us to predict but with patience and time, your new family member will reward your kindness many times over.

Please Remember, your cat is just part of your world and part of your life, but to your cat, you and your home are his or

her entire world. If you are reading this, we have pre-approved your application and we believe you will do your best to make it a wonderful life for him or her.