



Things To Consider Before Adopting A Cat

So you want to give a good home to a cat. You're almost ready to drive to the animal shelter and bring home a fur baby of your very own. Even though you have no idea of who you'll adopt, you're already thinking of perfect cat names.

Hang on just a moment. Before you get too excited, pause and think about these things.

- When you adopt a cat, you're committing up to 20 years of your life. Cats have fairly long life spans - especially when they're kept inside and are healthy. Owning the cat for a couple of years and then pawning her off on another human isn't fair. By that time, kitty has already bonded with you and will have a very hard time adjusting to a new home. And that's if the cat is fortunate: many unwanted cats end up in shelters, some of which have to euthanize animals to prevent overcrowding.
- Every cat needs to see the vet once or twice a year - even perfectly healthy kitties. Vet bills aren't cheap. Consider pet insurance if you can afford it. If nothing else, be ready to pay your vet for regular checkups and health screenings as well as shots and other routine care. You go to the doctor; so should your pet.
- In addition to any adoption fees or other costs that you might pay when you adopt your cat, you'll also have to equip your house with cat stuff. Kitty will need toys, food, a litter box (with litter and scoop) and perhaps even a bed of her very own. You don't have to spend three hundred bucks on cat toys, but your new kitty will need something to chase, bat around or destroy.
- Cats need attention. Despite their reputations for being aloof and distant, domestic house cats like being around humans. Make sure that you devote at least half an hour to your kitty every day. Petting, playing with and brushing the kitty are all good ways to bond. You can also talk to your cat.

- Speaking of companionship: many cats prefer feline playmates. Getting a second cat so that your kitty has a playmate helps them both pass the time when you're gone. And when you're at home, their interaction is almost always camera worthy. You'll soon have tons of pictures of your cats playing, sleeping and eating together.
- Sometimes kittens are the better choice; sometimes adult cats work out better. Don't limit yourself to just one age group. You might be surprised to discover that the year old kitty at the shelter is a better fit for your house than the six week old kitten.
- Your house needs to be cat proofed before your new kitty comes home. Some houseplants are toxic to cats; they need to go before your cat sets one paw inside. You need to make sure that electrical cords are put away (some cats like to chew on them). Basically: anything that could harm a human toddler should be kept away from the cat.
- If possible, you should have indoor only cats. You can leash train some kitties so that they can still go outside, but safely. Tame the kitty's yearning for the great outdoors by planting cat grass inside and giving him plenty of stimulating toys (like fake mice).

If you're certain that you can - and will - handle all of the responsibilities of cat ownership, go out and find your new buddy. A kitty is not just another thing to collect: he or she is a lifelong companion who will be with you for years to come.