



The ultimate new cat owner's checklist



Adopted a cat or got a new kitten? It can be both a daunting and exciting experience, especially if you're new to owning a cat. For a hassle-free guide to cat ownership, here's our checklist.

Questions to ask before bringing your new cat home

Wherever you have adopted your cat from, asking their previous owner or the rescue centre a few questions can help your cat to settle in their new place. These might include



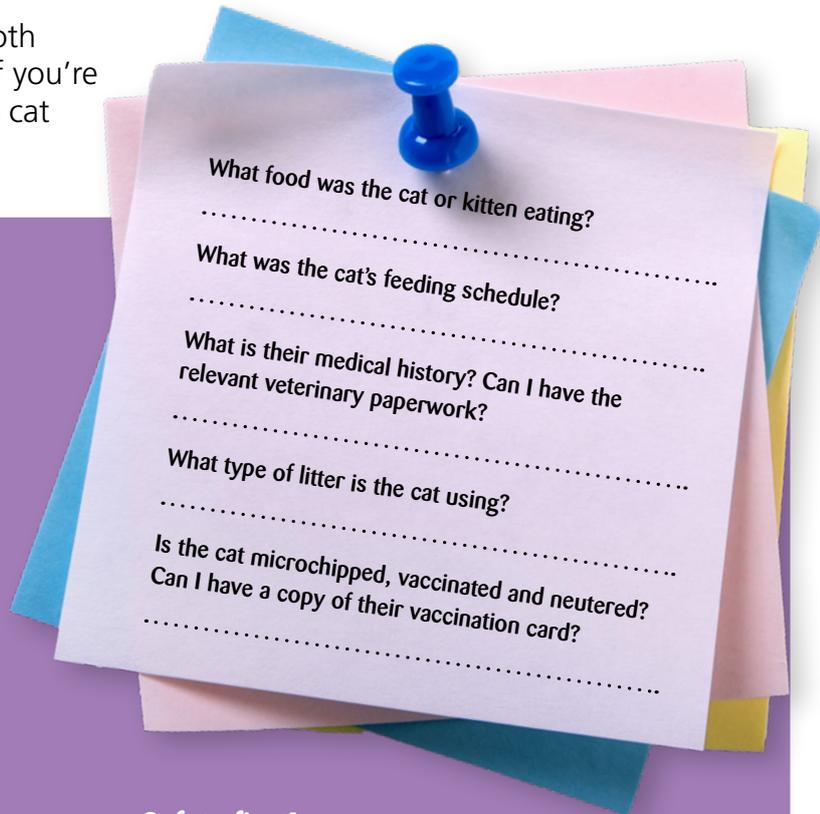
Setting up space for your new arrival

- Designate a quiet 'cat room'
- Set up a food area and water bowl
- Elsewhere, in the same room, set up the litter tray with litter (around 3cm deep)
- Provide a hiding space to allow them to feel safe (an empty cardboard box will do!)

Register with a vet

It is good to get signed up with a vet sooner rather than later. We'd advise taking your cat for a health check at least once a year. When choosing a vet, you might want to consider:

- location – in an emergency, it is best to have a vet near to you
- appointment services and opening hours – are they convenient for you?
- is the practice accredited to the RCVS Practice Standards Scheme? This means they are regularly inspected
- has the practice been designed to help cats be less fearful?



Safety first! How to cat proof your home

- Check your windows for loose cords and tassels
- Tidy away electrical wires
- Safely stow poisonous items like medication and human foods out of reach
- Check for any poisonous plants
- Block up any gaps or holes that you wouldn't want the cat hiding in

Get your cat neutered or spayed

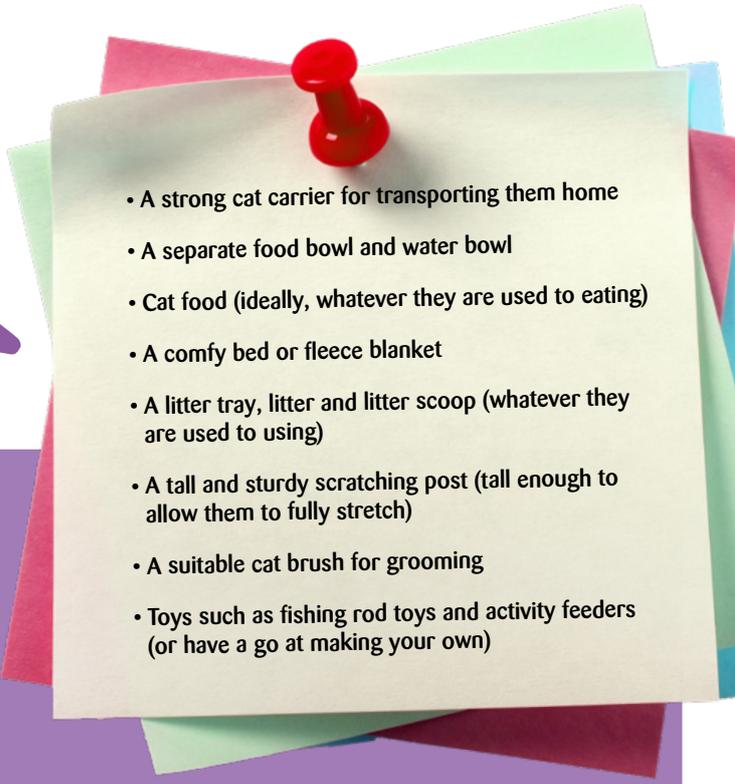
- Having your cat neutered is essential to prevent unwanted kittens and has numerous health benefits
- We'd advise neutering your cat at four months of age or younger, if they aren't already

[More information](#)



Time to go shopping? Here's what to buy for your new cat.



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- A strong cat carrier for transporting them home
 - A separate food bowl and water bowl
 - Cat food (ideally, whatever they are used to eating)
 - A comfy bed or fleece blanket
 - A litter tray, litter and litter scoop (whatever they are used to using)
 - A tall and sturdy scratching post (tall enough to allow them to fully stretch)
 - A suitable cat brush for grooming
 - Toys such as fishing rod toys and activity feeders (or have a go at making your own)

Choose pet insurance

Getting your cat insured helps to avoid expensive vet bills. Remember to do your research and look for the following:

- choose the level of cover your pet needs
- think about any extras, like lost and found cover
- check the policy for exclusions, like pre-existing medical conditions or your cat's age

Make sure your cat is microchipped

- Microchipping is the safest and simplest way of identifying your cat if they were to go missing
- Remember, you'll need to keep your details up to date if you move house to ensure a speedy reunion

Ensure your cat's vaccinations are up to date

- Vaccinations are vital to protect your cat against infectious diseases so if they haven't already visited a vet, it's time to get them booked in
- Kittens have their first vaccinations at 8-9 weeks, followed by a booster at 12 weeks. Your cat will need annual vaccinations throughout their life

Set a schedule

- Feeding – cats need to be fed at least twice a day, while kittens need meals 4-5 times a day
- Water – top up their water bowl with fresh water every day
- Litter tray – scoop out the litter box every day, topping up the litter as you go and change the litter at least once a week
- Grooming – long-haired cats will need brushing every day, short-haired cats need brushing regularly
- Play – have regular play sessions with your cat
- Worming and flea treatments – on a regular basis, or on the advice of your vet
- Vet visits – keep annual wellness checks and vaccinations in the calendar too

Find out more at
www.cats.org.uk/first-time-owners

We have loads of advice, how-to videos and guides for every stage of looking after your cat.