Indoor

Initiative

Table of Contents

1.	Getting Off to a Purrfect Start ► Cat's Like to Feel "In Control" ► Your Cat's Needs Checklist ► Feline Basics	3
2.	Cat Behavior – The Unique Feline Wake – Sleep Cycles Dogs as Predators Cats are not as Social Cats like hunting Your cat's moods	6
3.	 What Indoor Cats Need Informed Owners Litter boxes Scratching Resting Areas Perches Toys Identifying Your Cat's Prey Preference 	9
4.	Preventing Problems – Life Stressors of Cats and How to Make Your Cat More Comfortable New Environments Events in and Around the Home Comings and Goings New Pets Bringing Cats Indoors The Veterinarian Traveling with Your Cat	17
4.	Problem Solving How to Clean Up Cat Urine Spraying and Marking Introducing New Pets Separation Anxiety in Cats Conflict Between Cats Increasing the Activity of Your Cat 	28

Getting off to a purrfect start with your cat

(This advice applies to both male and female, so we've used both he and she to refer to your pet.)

Congratulations on your new feline companion! To be at their best, cats have some basic needs; meeting these needs will help ensure your cat's long-term health and welfare. If these needs are not met, your cat may feel stressed, which can affect both health and behavior.

Just like the rest of us, cats like to feel that they are "in control" of their surroundings and like to choose the changes they want to make. To help you "get off on the right foot" with your cat, we have provided descriptions of what an "ideal" house might include. Your cat might not need *all* of these features to get along, but making your house more "cat friendly" will ensure that you and your new cat enjoy each other's company for years to come.

To understand your home from your cat's point of view, it might help to think of welcoming an honored guest arriving from an exotic foreign land. In that case, you would naturally try to meet your guest's needs and habits, and expect that their needs might be somewhat different from yours. Here is a check list of cat needs to help you get started:

Provide a room or other space she can call her own, complete with:

Checklist	Item	Description / Details
	Food and Water	Just as our dining table isn't near the bathroom or bedroom, the food and water bowls and bed should be placed <i>away</i> from the litter box and kept fresh and clean.
	A Bed	A cat carrier with a soft pad inside is a good choice
	A Litter Box	They should be placed away from appliances and air ducts that could come on unexpectedly, and where another animal (or human!) cannot sneak up on the cat. Also CLEAN daily. Some cats need larger ones, & some do not like covered ones.
	A Scratching / Climbing Post	Places to climb and look out of windows are important to keep indoor cats healthy and happy. Cats prefer to "look down" on their surroundings; it adds to their sense of safety.
	A Window	Providing a visual stimulus of familiar, instinctual prey and stimulation keeps your cat interested and entertained.
	Toys	Cats are solitary hunters of small prey. Providing various types and sizes of toys can allow your cat to utilize this hunting instinct, providing fun and stimulation for both of you.

Completing this checklist will help your cat get used to the new surroundings and give her the sense that this space is a safe haven. You can spend some time alone with her in the room so you can get to know each other and provide profuse praise for using the toys, litter box, and scratching/climbing post.

The FELINE BASICS:

Now is also the time for you to understand that cats **DO NOT respond to force.** Reprimands only work if you catch your cat "in the act". Punishment that follows an action by more than a few seconds won't stop him from doing it again, and may even cause him to be afraid of you or the surroundings. It may even cause him to try to defend himself (those teeth



and claws are there for a reason!) If you do catch your cat making a mistake, it is better for both of you to create a distraction by making a loud noise or throwing something (NOT at the cat!) that will attract his attention, but not toward you. If the cat associates the distraction as coming from you she'll just learn to do it when you're not around. As with all honored guests, cats *do* respond to praise, and to distraction when they make a "mistake". As soon as the cat is distracted, you can take her to a location where the behavior is "ok", and praise her for doing it there.

Saving the Furniture.

Giving the cat something to scratch will help ensure that he can "do his thing" without damaging *your* things. Try to choose scratching objects with a texture

and position (flat or upright) similar to the cat's initial targets. If your cat stretches up to scratch, provide something that is about the same height. Put the object close to where you've seen the cat scratch, and be sure it is secure so she won't be startled by it moving unexpectedly. Just as you'll expect by now, praising her profusely when you see her use it will let her know that this is hers to use. If you don't already know how, learn how to clip your cat's claws (it's easy!), and do it regularly (see **What Indoor Cats Need – Trimming Your Cat's Nails** for details).



Providing places to climb and look out of windows are important to keep indoor cats healthy and happy. Cats prefer to "look down" on their surroundings; it adds to their sense of safety.

Once comfortable with "their own" space, the cat can be offered the opportunity to introduce herself to the rest of the house and its occupants. Remember, guests often prefer to get acquainted on their own terms, so don't rush this. When she's ready, she will become a part of the household. Another set of food and water bowls, litter box, and scratching/climbing post should be put elsewhere in the house when this happens. If the cat shows a preference for these objects, the ones in her room can be removed (litter box last!). Her bed should be left there for her continued use as a "refuge" (see Text Box for detailed description of **Refuge**). Place the food and water bowls, and the litter box, in convenient

(separate) locations that still give the cat some privacy while eating, drinking or "going to the bathroom". They should be placed away from appliances and air ducts that could come on unexpectedly, and located such that another animal (or human!) cannot sneak up on the cat while she uses them. To keep them appealing to the cat, food and water should be fresh, and the litter box "scooped" every day. If you want to offer a new type of food or litter, put it in a separate container next to the familiar one so the cat can decide whether or not to change.

Be sure to visit your veterinarian regularly. In addition to providing preventative health care through regular check-ups, vets also can help you **troubleshoot any** "issues" before they become problems.

These suggestions are only intended to get you off to a good start. More information is available in this manual, from your veterinarian, pet food company "kitten care" kits, and World Wide Web sites. You also can search on "kitten care" on the World Wide Web (some sites are better than others!). Also, check our <u>Additional Resources</u> and <u>What Indoor Cats Need</u> sections for more information at The Indoor Cat Initiative website (www.nssvet.org/ici).

What is a Refuge?

A refuge is a less-traveled or out-of-the-way area of the home where the cat has access to all the necessities; food, water, a litter box, a scratching post, perch, and toys. This should be a place where your cat feels safe and comfortable, for example a bedroom or back room. The refuge is a place your cat can retreat to when she needs quiet time alone. Your cat should be able to come and go freely from her refuge. When the cat is in her refuge, other members of the household, including people and pets, should not be allowed to bother her. Leaving a radio or TV on for your cat muffles sounds she hears but can't identify. The radio or TV also provides human voices for your cat to associate with safety.

Feliway spray is a feline facial pheromone analogue; a man-made version of the scent your cat deposits when she rubs her cheek on your leg or furniture. This substance is a signal that cats use to mark objects in their "territory". The smell tells the cat she is in a safe place. Feliway can be used to make a new place or situation "feel" more familiar and safe for cats.

Feliway is now available as a diffuser that plugs into a wall outlet (just like an air freshener). This may be a good choice for cats that are more anxious or require continuous calming. For more information visit www.Feliway.com.

1. Cat Behavior – The Unique Feline

√ Your cat's moods

Cats use different body postures to communicate their emotions. Below are some typical postures you may observe your in cat. When observing



Since I can't talk to you, this guide will help you understand what is happening in my "World."

your cat, try to get an idea of its usual attitude when alone and in contact with other animals, including people. As cats become more anxious about their surroundings, they will try to avoid contact with threats. Their "mood score" may change very quickly depending on the seriousness of the threat. The highest usually only possible. scores are seen when escape is not

Score	Body Po	stures	Head Po	stures
1 Relaxed	Activity – sleeping or resting, alert or active, may be playing Body – lying on side, on belly or sitting; if standing or moving, back horizontal Breathing – slow to normal Legs – bent, hind legs may be laid out; when standing extended Tail – extended or loosely wrapped; up or loosely down when standing		Head – laid on surface or over body, some movement Eyes – closed to open, pupils slit to normal size Ears –normal to forward Whiskers – normal to forward Sounds –none, purr	
2 Alert	Activity - resting, awake or actively exploring Body – lying on belly or sitting; if standing or moving the back is horizontal Breathing – normal Legs – bent; when standing extended Tail – on body or curved back; up or tense downwards when standing; may be twitching		Head – over the body, some movement Eyes – open normally, pupils normal Ears – normal or erected to front or back Whiskers – normal to forward Sounds –none or meow	
3 Tense	Activity – resting or alert, may be actively exploring, trying to escape Body – lying on belly or sitting; if standing or moving the back of the body is lower than the front ("slinking") Breathing – normal Legs – bent, hind legs bent and front legs extended when standing Tail – close to body; tense downwards or curled forward, may be twitching when standing.		Head – over the body or pressed to body, little or no movement Eyes – wide open or pressed together, pupils normal to partially dilated Ears – erected to front or back Whiskers – normal to forward Sounds – none, meow, or plaintive meow	
4 Anxious	Activity – alert, may be actively trying to escape Body – lying on belly or sitting; if standing or moving the back of the body is lower than the front Breathing – normal or fast Legs – under body, bent when standing Tail – close to the body; may be curled forward close to body when standing. The tip may move up and down or side to side.		Head – on the plane of the body, little or no movement Eyes – wide open, pupils dilated Ears – partially flattened Whiskers – normal to forward or back Sounds – none, plaintive meow, growling, yowling	
5 Fearful	Activity – motionless, alert or crawling Body – lying on belly or crouched directly on top of all paws, may be shaking; if standing the whole body is near to the ground, may be shaking Breathing – fast Legs – bent; when standing bent near to surface Tail – close to the body; curled forward close to the body when standing.		Head – near to surface motionless Eyes – fully open, pupils fully dilated Ears – fully flattened Whiskers – back Sounds – none, plaintive meow, growling, yowling	
6 Terrified	Activity – motionless alert Body –crouched directly on top of all paws, shaking. Hair on back and tail bushy. Breathing – fast Legs – stiff or bent to increase apparent size Tail – close to body		Head – lower than the body Eyes – fully opened, pupils fully dilated Ears – fully flattened, back on head Whiskers – back Sounds – none, plaintive meow, growling, yowling, hissing	

Cat's postures also try to communicate their emotions about other animals to them. These postures often are either friendly or conflict-related, depending on the situation at the time you observe them. Conflict related behaviors are often more subtle than those shown here, and only noticed when one learns what to look for. For example, you also

might observe one cat appearing tense or anxious when another (more dominant) cat casually blocks access to food, litter boxes, or other resources in the home. Cat behavior can be quite complex; entire books on the subject are available. These descriptions of the basic postures are only provided as an introduction to your cat's emotions.

Friendly postures				
	When cats approach in a friendly way they often hold their tail straight up, whiskers forward, and rub their chins or heads against other cats or people. Cats do this when greeting, or when confidently investigating something new.			
	When cats want to play they may roll over and expose their bellies. (Females also may display this behavior during mating.)			
	Cats also may arch their tails over their back or may move it fast when they are happy and want to play. Their pupils may be dilated (large) and ears forward. Cats with rapidly moving tails can be quite aroused, however, and it may not be a good idea to play with them as they may become aggressive and bite or scratch.			
Conflict-related postures				
	When a cat (left cat) is about to attack, the body is held in a straight-forward position, pupils are narrow, the tail may be moving rapidly from side to side, ears are back, and whiskers are forward.			
	When a cat is defending itself from another cat (right cat) it will lean backwards with an arched back. It may move the tail very fast, arch it over the back, or put it between the back legs. The ears are flat, pupils dilated (large), and the hairs may be erect. Cats do this to appear as large and threatening as possible.			
	When the threat is near, the belly and legs of the defensive cat (right cat) may touch the floor. The ears and whiskers will be back and flat against the head and the teeth may be exposed. Unlike dogs, cats only expose their bellies to show submission to try to stop an attack when no escape is possible, or when the cat is at the back of a cage or under furniture and wants to be able to slash with all four paws at any hand coming toward them.			

Adapted from Kessler MR, Turner DC. Stress and adaptation of cats (felis silvestris catus) housed singly, in pairs and in groups in boarding catteries. *Animal Welfare* 1997;6:243-254, Beaver BV. Feline Behavior: A guide for veterinarians. St. Louis: Elsevier Science, 2003:349, and UFAW Animal Welfare Research Report No. 8; An ethogram for behavioural studies of domestic cats, 1995.

To understand cats, we must first understand how they behave in their natural environment. Even if your cat lives indoors, its behaviors result from their survival value in the wild. In their natural environment, cats hunt for food, hide from predators (often by climbing), and defend their home territories. Indoors, these behaviors may look hostile (biting and scratching) or spiteful (climbing and marking), and we may not like them. The keys to enjoying cats in our lives are to 1) provide acceptable outlets for their natural behaviors, and 2) reduce their exposure to threats. The following paragraphs describe natural behaviors of cats, and how the indoor environment can be modified to permit cats to engage in them in appropriate ways.

Cats do not have the daily sleep-wake cycle that we and many other animals have. Rather, they sleep and wake frequently throughout the day and night. This is because cats in the wild need to hunt as many as 20 small prey each day; they must be able to rest between each hunt so they are ready to pounce quickly when prey approaches. This explains why our cats seem to sleep so much during the day when we are awake, and spend so much time awake at night when we need to sleep! We may conclude that cats are nocturnal (awake at night, asleep during the day) creatures, but it only seems that way because their sleep/wake cycle is so different from ours. Adding playful activities to your cats daily routine can diminish the occurrence of such nocturnal activity (see more on this in section **Problem Solving – Increasing Activity of Your Cat**).

Dogs are cat's most common natural predator in the wild. So, while many people joke about the "war" between cats and dogs, there actually is a biological explanation.

(This is not to say, however, that cats and dogs cannot live amicably together in your home!) Cats also may be afraid of other cats, of humans (if not properly socialized), and loud noises such as thunder, automobiles, and lawnmowers. Fearful cats generally have dilated pupils, flattened ears, a flattened or crouched body, and a fast breathing rate. If threatened further, they may hiss or growl, arch their back and puff up their fur (as shown in the Cat Mood Score) and may even attack.



Cats try to hide when they are anxious or feel threatened. They especially like to hide in high places, which permit a clear view of their surroundings. **This is why it is especially important to provide indoor cats with hiding areas**; these spots must permit the cat to feel safe from people, loud noises and other animals (See **What Indoor Cats Need – Perches** section Pg. 14 for more detail). If it is not safe for your cat to hide on top of the refrigerator, etc., then you will need to provide some other high location for your cat to hide in, such as a climbing tower or closet shelf.

Cats are not as social as many other species and they do not communicate in the same ways we do. Contrary to what many people believe, cats primarily rely on smell, not sight, to communicate with other cats, locate food, and detect predators. Cats communicate by "marking" objects and other animals. These marks are scents (called pheromones) released from special glands located in their forehead, cheeks, tail base, and paws when they scratch and rub their body on objects. Cats also do not rely too much on sounds from other cats, so they do not pay particular attention to the verbal sounds we humans make. Allowing your cats to mark scratching posts and other appropriate objects in the home will reduce the temptation for them to mark using urine (for more info on this see Section 2. – What Indoor Cats Need – Scratching and Perches). This takes us to the next point; it is important that indoor cats have enough

litter in a clean litter box to hide urine scents after covering. In the wild, cats urinate in new clean spots all the time; if we want them to use the same spot each time, we have to keep it clean!

Cats are carnivores; they eat primarily small rodents, birds, and bugs. Because hunting is such a big part of a cat's life, even indoor cats want to engage in hunting types of activity. Keep this in mind when shopping for toys for your cat; most prefer those that resemble mice, birds, and bugs. If you really want to make it realistic, make the toy move like it really is alive!

Cats establish their home hunting ranges by scent marking them. Males will physically defend their ranges from other males, but females usually share or overlap their home range with other females. The size of a home range or territory can be up to 6km^2 (~20 city blocks). Because cats in the wild hunt small prey, they tend to lead solitary lives so each cat gets enough to eat. If a food resource is very plentiful, cats may live in small groups, 2-25, consisting mainly of females. Male cats generally live alone regardless of food source, because they also compete with other males for mates.

Cats can be aggressive when defending territories, fearful when threatened, engage in play behavior with one another (especially as kittens), and groom each other throughout adulthood.

Cats walk, run, jump, pounce, and climb as they move through their habitat. They frequently walk or climb in trees or on top of buildings and fences to have a better view of their surroundings. Therefore, indoor cats must have areas of the house where they can climb and rest in high locations. Some cats also prefer to sleep and rest in high locations, where they are safe from surprise attacks from other animals. Some indoor cats appreciate special cat beds or blankets.

Mothers and other females in their group raise the kittens. Kittens begin to sample the mother's kill while still nursing, and begin to hunt alone at 8 to 16 weeks of age. They generally rest and groom together with their mothers until they are 6 to 12 months old. Adult males patrolling the mother's home range usually evict the juvenile males; juvenile females may leave if food resources are low. Adults establish their own home territory (range), and may be dominant or subordinate within the parts of their range that overlap that of other cats.

Cats use smell and sight to locate and procure food. When they see small movements, they stalk (move slowly, quietly, and intently) and pounce (jump quickly) on the prey. They use their claws to grab and hold the prey, and they bite until they kill their prey. When cats play with toys, you can see them using these same hunting skills. Sometimes cats play a little too hard and may scratch or bite you. You can teach your cat to inhibit this inappropriate play behavior by leaving the area when your cat is not playing nicely!

Outdoor cats experience a wide range of temperature. Since cats cannot sweat very well, they learn to seek shade in warm temperatures, and warmth in cold temperatures. Indoor cats use shade, fans, bedding, and blankets to regulate their temperature throughout the year.

Most cats are so good at grooming themselves that they do not need baths to stay clean. Longhaired (if the hair mats), obese, old, or sick cats may need extra combing and brushing. While cats in the wild do not have this luxury, you can help your cat stay healthy and clean if he struggles to do it for himself.

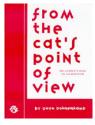
2. What Indoor Cats Need

To enrich the lives of indoor cats, we have developed this "resource checklist"; and some suggestions for making changes.

✓ Informed Owners

As an owner, one of the most important things you can do for you cat is to educate yourself about feline idiosyncrasies. These resources will help you do just that.

Books



From the Cat's Point of View answers nearly every question the new cat owner could have and gives the experienced cat owner a look at life from the other side of the scratching post. If you only get one book, get this one!

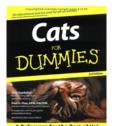
Research has proven that you can make your cat smarter. Whether your cat is gifted or intellectually challenged, you can help him become a certified Felinestein -- a more effective communicator, better problem solver, and faster learner.



Felinestein includes 100 games and activities, some for every type of owner and every personality of cat, that will

get your cat exploring, thinking, and making decisions. Incorporating just a few of these challenges into your cat's life will spark his brain power and enrich his life. Most importantly, it will help the two of you bond on a whole new level.

Gina Spadafori, Universal Press Syndicate pet care columnist and host of AOL's "Gina Spadafori's Pet Connection," follows her educational and entertaining book



Dogs for Dummies with Cats for Dummies, which she co-authors with Paul Pion, D.V.M., D.A.C.V.I.M., president of the Veterinary Information Network.

If you own a cat or are considering cat ownership, Cats for Dummies is a book you'll want to look at. This educational, comprehensive, and entertaining book is probably the closest

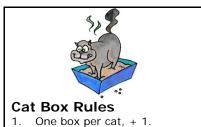
you'll get to a cat "owners' manual."

✓ Litter Boxes

Provide *At least* one litter box per cat plus one and clean them daily.

Introduction

Elimination is a basic need for our feline friends. When we house them indoors it is crucial that we provide a place to eliminate that the cat finds attractive. The goal to keep in mind is to provide positive litter box experiences so the cat will continue to use the boxes provided. Cats will avoid anything that has been associated with a negative experience. If your cat has



- Big enough to use easily
- 3. Unscented, clumping litter
- 4. Locate for safety and privacy.
- 5. KEEP IT CLEAN

difficulties getting to or into the box, if something startles him while he is using the box, or if he has a negative experience while leaving the box he may avoid that box in the future.

Understanding the natural elimination habits of cats will help prevent problems from developing. Most cats are meticulously clean; they cover their waste and try to eliminate in areas that have not been used before. And although cats eliminate in response to basic biological drives, they also use eliminations to mark their territory. To meet their territorial needs, a good rule to follow is to provide one litter pan per cat plus one in a household. A litter box also should be located on every level of a multi-level home. Multiple boxes provide cats with appropriate places to eliminate and mark territory without offending you or other cats in the household.

The box

There are many shapes, sizes and styles of litter boxes on the market. By taking a little time, considering your cat and your home, you can find ones that work for both of you. Litter boxes need to be big enough for cats to enter and move around in. Larger pans are better because they provide a bigger area for the cat to eliminate in without stepping in the old eliminations, (remember that cats are meticulously clean and do not like getting themselves soiled.) Kittens, older cats and cats with health problems may need accommodations to permit easy entry and exit from the box.

Deciding on what type of litter box to use also can be a challenge. Uncovered boxes have easier accessibility, but may not provide the privacy some cats desire. A covered box may be more attractive to them, but it will need to be scooped and cleaned more often to keep it appealing to the cat. If you are not sure which box your cat prefers, provide both and keep using the one the cat chooses. If your cat uses both then keep both. If you do use a covered pan, never store the scooper or anything on the cover that could fall and startle the cat. Make sure the lid is secure so it can't move and startle the cat while she is using the box. If you need to change box type (or litter type), offer the new box or litter beside the old one and let the cat tell you which she prefers.

Choosing litter

There are many different types of litter on the market that you may use. Always consider your cat whenever purchasing products. Once you find a litter

that your cat likes, stick with it. Abrupt changes can result in the cat not using the litter box. Research has shown that most cats prefer fine-grained litters; scoopable litters usually have finer grains than clay litters. Many cats prefer unscented litters, and are put off by the odor of scented or deodorant litters. This is also a good reason not to place room deodorizers or air fresheners near the box.

Your cat's health may be a consideration when choosing a litter. Cats with upper respiratory infections, asthma, or other breathing problems will need a dust-free substrate. After surgical procedures, you may need to change the substrate in the litter box for a short period of time if your veterinarian prescribes it. During this time, you may want to consider placing the new substrate in another litter box where the original litter boxes were, and carefully observe the cat's response to the change. When it is time to return to the original substrate, put the litter pans with the substrate back in their original locations and observe your cat for any problems using them.

How much litter to use

Some cats prefer lots of litter, whereas others want very little. You can determine your cat's preference by filling the box half way, then tipping it so the amount varies from shallow at one end to deep at the other end. Observe where the cat deposits her eliminations, toward the shallow or deep end, and proceed to fill the box to that level.

Location

Litter boxes need to be placed in areas that provide easy access for the cat, while providing some privacy and a clear escape route. They must be located away from appliances and air ducts that could come on unexpectedly, and in an area that another animal or human cannot sneak up on your cat and startle her while she is "doing her business". If you place the box in an area that has a door, you will need to wedge the door open to prevent the cat from getting trapped in the area. These factors should be considered for all areas where you place a litter box. You may want to place a rug or placemat under the litter pan to avoid scattered litter around the box, to make it easier to keep the area clean.

Cleaning

Litter pans need to be scooped daily. Clean the litter pans once a week with water and a non-scented soap. Weekly cleaning is just a general guideline; if you have more than one cat, or if circumstances dictate, then you may need to clean the boxes more often. Never use ammonia or strong smelling cleaners for this job. A cat's urine contains ammonia compounds and strong cleaner's may be toxic to the cat. A thin layer of baking soda placed on the bottom of the box will help absorb odors without repelling your cat between scoopings. Odor shouldn't be a problem if the litter box is kept clean. If you find the odor offensive, your cat may also find it offensive and not want to eliminate there.

✓ Scratching



You already know that cats like to scratch, but why and how can you encourage "proper" scratching? Scratching is a natural behavior for cats. Cats scratch to stretch their muscles, shed old cuticles, sharpen their claws, and leave scent marks. Even when declawed, cats retain the instinct to scratch. Scratching posts provide cats with an outlet for their instinct to scratch while at the same time saving your furniture and carpets! To choose the right scratching post for your cat, consider the following:

What does your cat like to scratch?

Choose a scratching post that is similar to the material your cat most likes to scratch. Most, but not all, cats prefer scratching posts made out of rough material they can shred. Sisal (a coarse natural fiber) scratching posts are ideal because they are satisfying to scratch and tough enough to stand up to repeated use. Vertical (upright) and horizontal (flat) scratching posts are available in a variety of sizes and materials including sisal, carpet and cardboard. Cats that scratch chair legs or the corners of your couch may prefer a vertical scratching post. Make sure that vertical scratching posts are tall enough so your cat can stretch up while she scratches. Cats that scratch rugs and carpets may prefer a horizontal scratching post or mat. Scratching posts should be stabilized to ensure that they don't move or tip over and scare your cat while she is using them.

Where does your cat scratch?

Cats scratch to leave scent marks that define their territory and tell other cats they have passed through. They will often scratch prominent objects near sleeping areas and room entrances. Therefore, scratching posts should be located in these and other "public" parts of the house that the whole family uses. In multi-cat households there should be several scratching posts, both vertical and horizontal, located throughout the house. These posts should be placed in areas where the cats congregate and along their routes to common areas such as food and water bowls, and litter boxes. Setting up multiple scratching posts provides the cats with an acceptable place to leave their mark without ruining furniture and carpets.

What if my cat won't use the scratching post?

Considering your cat's demonstrated preferences, substitute similar objects for her to scratch. Place the scratching post near the object you want the cat to stop scratching. Cover the inappropriate objects with something your cat will find unappealing, such as double sided sticky tape, aluminum foil, sheets of sandpaper or a piece of plastic carpet runner with the pointy side up. You may give the objects an objectionable odor by attaching cotton balls soaked with a citrus scent or perfume. Don't use anything that could harm the cat if she ingests it though, and be careful with strong odors because you don't want the nearby acceptable objects to be associated with the unpleasant smell.

When your cat is consistently using the scratching post, it can be moved very gradually (no more than a few inches each day) to a location more suitable to you. It's best, however, to keep the scratching post as close to your cat's preferred scratching locations as possible.

Trimming your cat's nails



Nail trims are an easy, and often overlooked, way to reduce damage from scratching. You can clip off the sharp tips of your cat's claws as often as necessary. There are several types of nail trimmers designed especially for cats. These are better than your own nail clippers because they won't crush the nail bed.

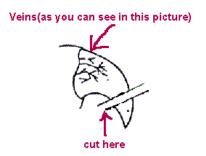
Before trimming your cat's claws, accustom her to having her paws handled and squeezed. You can do this by gently petting her legs and paws while giving her a treat to make it a more pleasant experience (it helps to do this before feeding while you're training her). Gradually increase the pressure so that petting becomes gentle

squeezing, as you'll need to do this to extend the claw. Continue with the treats until your cat tolerates having her feet handled.

When she is ready, apply a small amount of pressure to the cat's paw, with your thumb on top of her paw and your index finger underneath, until a claw is extended. Near the cat's nail bed you should be able to see a pink area, called the "quick", which contains small blood vessels. *Don't* cut into the pink portion of the nail because it will bleed and be painful for the cat. Cut off just the sharp tip to dull the claw.

Go slowly with your cat or she may become fearful of having her nails trimmed. To begin with, trim just one foot (or nail) each day. As your cat becomes accustomed to having her nails clipped you can trim all four feet at the same time.

If you prefer not to trim your cat's nails, you can purchase soft plastic caps that fit over the nail. Nail caps are available under the brand name Soft Paws and



are available in a variety of sizes and colors. For more information on nail caps please visit www.catscratching.com.

✓ Resting Areas

It may *seem* like all they do is sleep, but there is a method behind cats' narcoleptic tendencies.



Cats are at their most vulnerable while sleeping, so they prefer to rest in areas where they feel safe and secure. Desirable resting areas typically are quiet, comfortable locations where the cat can get away from other members of the family. Your cat may choose to get out of the way by resting on top of the kitchen cupboards or under the bed, or she may like to sleep curled up in her cat tree or on your bed or sofa.

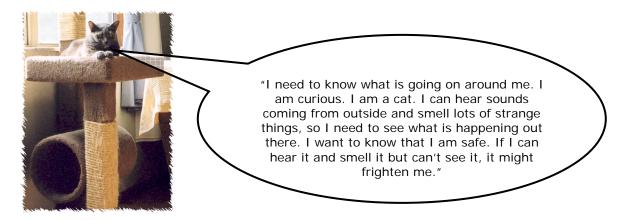
Owners who prefer the cat to stay off of the bed and other furniture can encourage the cat to rest elsewhere by

providing a refuge in a quiet part of the house. A refuge is a less-traveled or out-of-the-way area of the home where the cat has access to all of the necessities; a bed, food, water, a litter box, a scratching post, perch, and toys (see Pg 5 for a detailed description of a **refuge**). Cat beds can be purchased, but snug blankets and towels are just as appealing to cats and are easy to wash. The refuge should be a place where your cat feels safe and comfortable, for example a bedroom or back room. Your cat can retreat to her refuge whenever she wants to rest.

Wherever your cat chooses to rest it is important not to disturb her. Just as you may not want to be bothered while you are asleep or resting, neither does your cat. Respect your cat's privacy when she is resting and she will be more likely to seek you out when she is ready to interact.

✓ Perches

Everyone likes a pleasant view, and cats are no exception.



Cats like to climb, so a perch provides a safe and private place to watch the action from above. A perch is anything that allows your cat to lie, sit, sleep or look outside from above. A perch is a *must* have for your cat. Perches come in a wide variety of shapes and sizes. You can get perches that attach to a windowsill

or you could custom build a perch. More than one perch is great so your cat can look outside at different angles. You can even place a couch, sofa, chair, or sturdy table in front of a window, so your cat can look outside. If you really want to get creative, you can make the scenery more attractive by hanging a bird feeder in the yard and/or plant pretty flowers to attract bees, butterflies, and other insects. This will keep your cat interested and she may sit on her perch for hours looking outside.

"I may feel safer if I can sleep somewhere high. If you are having a problem with finding a suitable area for a perch, watch me and I will show you where I feel comfortable, usually by curling up in a ball and falling asleep."

If you prefer an area different than where your cat chooses, you will need to offer her treats and kind words as you can her to or place her in the area you would like

as you coax her to or place her in the area you *would* like for her to use. Cats respond better if you *entice* to *encourage* the behaviors you want rather than *reprimand* to *discourage* those you don't want (don't we all?).

✓ Toys

Cats need recreation too!

Identifying your cat's toy (prey) preference

There are many different kinds of toys for cats that you can buy, or make yourself. **Cats like toys that** *do* **something.** Toys that squeak, chirp, jitter, swing or vibrate remind them of moving meals, enticing them to interact. The first toy you might try is a furry mouse that makes noise and moves. Some even have catnip in them! You can just roll it past your cat on the floor to catch her attention; she'll let you know if it looks like lunch. Each cat is an individual; some like some toys better than others, so

just offer a few and they will show you what they like!

"My ancestors had to hunt insects, birds, mice, and other small animals to survive. They had to catch 10 or 20 of these morsels every day, so they had to be ready to pounce at a instant's notice. I don't have to hunt anymore, but I still like to pounce. Having things to stalk and pounce on makes me happy and keeps me healthy and active."





Cats also like toys that have a wand or stick with a toy dangling from the end of a string. They make her feel like she's using her natural quickness and agility to catch something, and it lets her interact with you too. Just let the toy dangle in front her, then slowly drag it away. Sometimes she can get carried away attacking it, so please be sure she can't bite or

chew off a piece that she could choke on.

Balls are another great item to use; they provide the cat with chase and capture. Cats are very good at swatting balls. Things that move on their own also fascinate them, so balls (like ping pong balls) and furry little mice toys that move are great. They also like toys they can catch, pick up and toss in the air. You can also fill balls with food or treats for your cat to play with; this allows your cat to feel like she can have a hunting and stalking session, and catch her own meal.

There is no set number of toys your cat needs, but variety is key to keep her from getting bored with the toys. It often works best to have a batch of toys that can be rotated a few at a time to keep your cat interested. You can rotate them in different sequences to make the old toys seem new and exciting. Without this, your cat will just get bored, sleep twenty-three hours a day, and maybe gain weight, or maybe carve out some pattern in your furniture. Your cat might love a certain toy so much that they start sleeping next to it. When this occurs, they are telling you they'd like to keep it, and not have it included in the toy rotation.

Simple things often make great toys, like crumpled up paper balls, the plastic rings off of milk jugs, the center rolls from toilet paper, cotton-tipped swabs, paper towels, lots of things. You can even stuff old cotton socks with cotton balls and a little catnip, then tie a knot in the end. Cats need an

assortment of toys they can roll, pounce on, capture and sink their teeth into, carry and chase. As long as it is safe for your cat, then she may use it.

Also because of their hunting heritage, cats like visual stimulation. If they don't have (or can't get to) a window to look out of, you could buy or make a videotape from a nature show that has live action. They especially like to watch birds, fish, rodents and insects. These videos are great once in awhile when you can't be around to play with them.



Identifying your cat's toy (prey) preferences

Most cats prefer to hunt specific creatures. For example, some cats prefer to chase mice, while others may prefer to catch birds or bugs. Identifying your cat's "prey preference" allows you to buy or make toys that your cat will be more likely to play with rather than ignore. You can identify your cat's prey preference by paying close attention to the way he/she reacts to toys with specific qualities:

- 1. Find a number of toys or objects that resemble birds. Examples include feathers, stuffed toys covered in feathers, objects suspended in air, and toys making chirping noises.
- 2. Entice your cat to play by making each object move and fly through the air. Does your cat follow the object? Does he follow all of the objects or ignore most of them? Take note.
- 3. Next, put those objects out of kitty's sight, and try objects resembling mice, such as fur, stuffed animals, furry mice, and balls. How does your cat react when you make each of these objects move? Does kitty want to chase it? Or is he waiting for you to bring the feathers back out?
- 4. Try both "bird toys" and "mouse toys" at the same time by alternating them about every 20 seconds. Which does kitty prefer? Does he prefer some of each kind? Maybe he prefers both birds and mice!
- 5. Finally, put all of these toys away, and try toys resembling bugs. You can try a laser toy, a string with a knot on the end, and some dry food or treats tossed across the floor. How does your cat react? Try to alternate with "bird toys" and "mouse toys" to see which prey is best.
- 6. If your cat seems to enjoy feathers and/or objects in the air, choose toys resembling birds. If your cat prefers furry toys and/or toys moving on the ground, choose objects resembling mice. If your cat likes tiny objects with lots of movement, choose toys resembling bugs.
- 7. Be creative! Once you know what types of creatures your cat would like to hunt, think of the qualities those creatures possess and find toys with the same qualities.
- 8. Think like a cat! When you look for potential toys for your cat, imagine what kind of animal it might resemble.

 After all, a ball of paper is not just a ball of paper... it's lunch!



3. <u>Preventing Problems</u> - Life Stressors of Cats and How to Make Your Cat More Comfortable

✓ New Environments

Moving to a New Home

Moving to a new home can be an extremely stressful time for a cat. The stress usually begins as soon as the packing does as familiar things that they may have marked as their territory are being taken away. Before packing begins, provide your cat with a **refuge** (see Pg 5 for detailed description of **refuge**).

Set up a new refuge for your cat as soon as you arrive at your new home. Visit the cat in her refuge and spend "quality time" with her by playing with a favorite toy, petting her, or brushing her. You might also place some of your clothing or other things with familiar smells nearby as an added source of comfort.

Leave your cat in the refuge until you have moved everything in and everyone else is settled. Once the house is in order allow the cat to investigate her new surroundings on her own. Leave the refuge available for the cat to come and go as she wishes. For the first few weeks, if the cat still seems hesitant, keep her in the refuge while you are away. Each cat adjusts to new surroundings at a different pace and it may take time for your cat to get used to her new home. Let your cat decide when she is comfortable.

Boarding

If it becomes necessary to board your cat, precautions can be taken to help alleviate the stresses he may encounter. These stresses include being in unfamiliar surroundings with unfamiliar people and animals, and also being removed from normal schedules.

Choosing an appropriate facility to board your cat is very important. Some things to look for include; does the facility have a "cats only" area that will shield them from barking dogs?, are the walls sound proof?, do they allow personal items and food to be brought in with your pet?, is veterinary care available if needed?, will they administer medications? Don't be afraid to ask for a tour of the kennel so you can see exactly where your cat will be housed.

Always bring along the cat's own food, blanket, toys, and a couple of articles of your clothing. The scent of your clothing will be comforting to the cat because it is familiar and makes them feel that you are nearby. Ask the staff not to remove it from the cage. Bring along a spare piece of clothing sealed in a plastic bag in case the first one gets soiled. Ask the staff to leave your cat's carrier in the cage or provide a box or brown bag so that she can hide.

When you bring the cat home, make sure that her refuge is still available. Cats recognize one another by scent. When your cat returns home, other cats may treat her as an outsider because she smells like the boarding kennel. An effective method of decreasing the likelihood of the scent causing a problem is to

apply baby powder or vanilla to the area between the eyes and the ears (forehead). This is one area where cats release pheromones, their scent, from and will make the cats all smell the same. You may need to slowly reintroduce her to avoid conflict (see Introducing a New Cat).

Remodeling

When you remodel, your cat is exposed to many new sights, sounds, and even smells. Loud power tools, paint, chemicals, and construction materials can be frightening for cats. A few days before you begin remodeling, provide a refuge for the cat if she doesn't already have one. This will provide a "safe place" for her to stay, and will help to alleviate some of the stress involved with all the changes going on in their world. Leave a radio or TV playing in or near the refuge to provide calming "white noise" to cover up the noise of construction.

When the remodeling is complete, let the cat explore the new area at her own pace and maintain her refuge so that she can return to a familiar place when she needs to. You can also use Feliway in the remodeled area to provide a calming influence on the cat.

Moving Furniture

Moving furniture changes the familiar layout of your cat's environment. Before you move the furniture, put the cat in her refuge, leaving a TV or radio on in that area. When you are finished moving the furniture you can use Feliway in the area where furniture was moved to provide a calming influence on the cat. Let the cat explore the new layout at her own pace and maintain her refuge so she can return to a familiar place when she needs to.

✓ Events in and Around the Home Holidays

Holidays bring many changes to our cats' environment. Many holiday events that may not be considered stressful to people can be very stressful for cats. These changes may include seeing new people such as guests, changes in owners' schedules, new "furniture" such as holiday decorations and Christmas trees, and moving existing furniture to accommodate decorations. Any type of change in their daily routine may be a source of stress for your cat. A refuge will help your cat feel safe and provide a place for her to retreat to when household activities are hectic. Make sure that your guests respect the privacy of your cat's refuge. Visit the cat in her refuge and spend "quality time" with her by playing with a favorite toy, petting her, or brushing her. You might also place some of your clothing or other things with familiar smells nearby as an added source of comfort.

Construction Occurring Outside the Home

Noise and commotion occurring outside your home and in your neighborhood can be frightening for your cat. Street repairs, utility work and even backyard construction can generate enough noise to cause fear and anxiety for cats. In addition to her refuge, a radio or TV playing in or near the refuge will provide calming "white noise" to muffle the sound of construction. A perch may be placed in an area of the home where outside sounds don't penetrate as loudly. Cats are curious and need to know what is going on around them. If they hear strange sounds coming from outside but are not able to see what is causing it they may become frightened. Providing a perch on a windowsill will help to alleviate this problem.

Changing Schedules

When your daily schedule changes, your cat's schedule also changes. Disruptions in your cat's daily routine can be a source of stress. Try to keep the cat's daily schedule as normal as possible. When changes are unavoidable, increase the amount of play, interaction or petting and grooming time your cat receives to help reassure her. It may be helpful to establish two or more 10 minute play times during the day. If the cat will be alone for extended periods, you can ask a friend or relative with whom the cat is familiar with to visit the cat while you are out.

Changing Seasons

As the seasons change the things your cat sees outside the window change. Birds come and go, insects buzz around, small mammals dart around, and leaves fall. The view out the window is like TV for your cat. One seasonal event that may cause your cat some stress is when spring and summer arrive there may be a higher incidence of stray cats hanging around where your cat can see them. If this happens on a continuing basis, you may need to cover the window or attempt to discourage the strays from hanging around the house. Place perches by more than one window so that she can "change channels". In the winter time, when there is less to see, you can help entertain your cat indoors. Set up a fish tank for the cat to look at or buy a "kitty video" that features frolicking birds and small rodents.

Thunderstorms

Some cats are very fearful of the noise made by thunder and lightening storms. Make sure your cat has access to her refuge, and play a radio or TV to help cover the noise of the storm. Provide hiding areas that will allow the cat to escape the sound. For example, leave a closet ajar so the cat can hide inside. If you are home during the storm, sit with the cat. Try to engage the cat in play to distract her as long as this does not make her aggressive. Reward her with treats and praise to help create a more pleasant association with storms.

Cats that are extremely agitated or wild during storms may need to be confined to a small space such as a cat carrier or bathroom. If your cat fits into this group ask your veterinarian about medication that can help.

√ Comings and Goings

Introducing Your New Baby

Bringing home a new baby is a hectic and exciting time for everyone in your household. Before the baby is born you can help ease the transition for your cat by getting her used to the sounds and smells associated with babies. You may want to start using small amounts of baby lotion, baby oil and baby powder on your own skin so that the cat gets accustomed to the scent and associates it with you. Playing a tape recording of an infant's cry will help get your cat used to a soon to be familiar sound in your home. Have a friend with a baby visit so your cat will get used to the sight, smell and sound of a baby.

When preparing the nursery, allow plenty of time so that the cat can get used to it. Let the cat explore the new room at her own pace and maintain her refuge so that she can return to a familiar place when she needs to. Make the crib undesirable to the cat by placing empty soda cans in it. Cans are uncomfortable to lie down on and will rattle if the cat jumps in. The cat will associate the unpleasant noise with the crib, not you. Alternatively, a crib net may be placed over the crib to keep the cat out. Pull netting tight to keep the cat from using it as a hammock.

When the baby arrives, try to keep the cat's routine as normal as possible. Increase the amount of playtime or petting and grooming your cat receives from family members to reassure her. Your cat will be curious about the baby. Let her see and smell the baby while you supervise carefully. The cat may want to be near you when you hold or nurse the baby. Let the cat sit beside you or have someone offer her treats or playtime while you are busy with the baby. Allow yourself time daily to play with your cat.

Vacation

When you go away on vacation your cat either finds herself home alone or in a boarding kennel. Being boarded means she in unfamiliar surroundings with unfamiliar people and animals, and she also is removed from her normal schedule. Hiring a pet sitter to come to your home and stay with the cat or visit your home daily is a good alternative. If you decide to hire a pet sitter, introduce the sitter to the cat a few weeks ahead of your vacation. If possible, set up a couple of "play-dates" so that you, your cat, and the sitter can get to know each other. Playtime interaction that includes food treats can help to establish a positive relationship between the cat and the sitter. In other words, if your cat associates the sitter with playtime and treats, she will be glad to see her! You should also make sure the sitter is familiar with your cat's daily routine. Try to make a list that includes what time of day you usually feed the cat, scoop the litter, and have playtime or petting and grooming time with the cat.

A piece of clothing or a blanket with your scent on it left in her refuge will help calm the cat and make her feel that you are nearby. If you decide to board her, see recommendations on "**Boarding Your Cat**" on page 19.

Temporary Absence of Primary Caretaker

Keep the cat at home if possible. Have other family members spend more time interacting with the cat.

Entertaining Guests

Having new people in the home can be confusing and frightening for your cat. Allow the cat to approach guests if she wants to (and the guest is not afraid of cats), but never force her to interact with new people. Make sure that guests respect the privacy of your cat's refuge.

Familiar Person Leaving

Try to keep the cat's routine as normal as possible during this period of transition. Increase the amount of playtime or petting and grooming your cat receives to help reassure her.

New Person Moving In

Try to keep the cat's routine as normal as possible during this period of transition. Increase the amount of playtime or petting and grooming your cat receives to help reassure her. Involve the new person in play sessions with the cat. Playtime interaction that includes food treats can help to establish a positive relationship between the cat and the new person. Most importantly, allow the cat to investigate the new person and their belongings at her own pace. Make sure the new person understands the importance of and respects the privacy of your cat's refuge. Each cat adjusts at a different pace and it may take time for her to get used to the new person. Let the cat decide when she is comfortable.

Death of a Human or Animal Family Member

Cats, like people, take time to adjust to loss. They go through the same stages of grief that humans do. Your cat may experience loss of appetite, become anxious or depressed, behave inappropriately and become more vocal. Don't attempt to punish your cat for changes in her behavior at this time. Try to keep her routine as normal as possible during this period of transition. Make sure her refuge is available, and increase the amount of playtime or petting and grooming she receives to help reassure her.

If the deceased was the cat's primary caretaker, an article of clothing that belonged to that person can be placed in the cat's refuge. Ideally the new caretaker should be someone the cat is familiar with. If that is not possible and

the cat needs to be re-located, the guidelines for moving the cat to a new home should be followed (see **New Environments - Moving to a New Home** above).

✓ Introducing New Pets



New pets must be properly introduced to your cat. Introductions should be done slowly and with care to avoid creating hostility between animals. Animals should never be thrown together and left alone to "work things out". There are established guidelines to follow for successful introductions.

Introducing a New Cat

The new cat should be given her own room containing all the necessities; food, water, a litter box, a scratching post, perch, and toys. This is just like a refuge except that the new cat is not permitted to leave

that room, yet. The newcomer should be kept in her room for at least one week. The cats need time to get familiar by smelling one another without coming face to face. Although your cat will smell the new cat's scent on you, you may better acquaint the cats with one another's scent by giving each a towel to lay on and then swapping the towels after a couple of days. Another effective method of decreasing the likelihood of the scent causing a problem is to apply a little baby powder or vanilla to the area between the eyes and the ears (forehead). This is an area cats release pheromones (their scent) from. Masking the cat's scents will make the cats all smell the same.

When the cats have gotten familiar with one another's scent, begin feeding them on opposite sides of the closed door. This creates a positive association between food and the other cat's scent. When the cats are eating comfortably at the door you can start introducing visual contact.

Allow gradual visual contact by opening the door a small amount. Secure the door so the cats may look at one another but not walk through. It is common for cats to hiss at each other initially, but if they become aggressive or extremely hostile close the door and leave them alone for a few hours. Open the door

slightly again when the cats are relaxed. When they can look at one another calmly, open the door wider. After the cats can look at each other without hissing or becoming agitated, open the door and let them meet while you watch from a distance. If problems occur, return the new cat to her room and close the door. Gradually increase open door time until the cats are comfortable with each other. Keep the room available to the new cat so she has a safe place to retreat to if she feels threatened.



Introducing a New Dog

Before bringing your new dog home, make sure your cat has a refuge. When you bring the dog home do not let him have full access to the house; confine him to one or two rooms using baby gates. Let your cat investigate this newcomer at her own pace. Keep the dog confined until the cat is comfortable moving around the house and approaching the baby gate to investigate.

Next, set up some controlled meetings. Put the dog on lead and walk him into the room where the cat is sitting. Walk him around the room on a loose lead (a tight lead will transmit your anxiety about the situation to the dog). Do not allow the dog to act inappropriately toward the cat (barking, lunging, chasing). A mild correction ("no") and a request to "sit" should suffice. If the correction is too severe the dog will associate getting into trouble with the cat. Reward calm behavior from the dog using praise and food treats. Give special treats and praise to the cat when the dog is in the room to help create a positive association with the presence of the dog.

The cat may hiss, swat, and growl at the dog. Do not punish her for this or she will associate the dog with the punishment. Repeat these controlled meetings until both animals remain calm and relaxed with each other. Don't allow the dog to have free run of the house until you are certain the animals are comfortable with one another.

Most dogs and cats can live together peacefully. It is important to remember that dogs are natural predators of cats. For this reason you should never permit the dog to chase the cat or pick her up in his mouth. You may know that the dog has friendly intentions but the cat doesn't!

√ Bringing Cats Indoors

Making Your Outdoor Cat Indoor-Only

The decision to keep your cat indoors or allow him to go outside is a highly personal one. Keeping your cat indoors may reduce the risk for traumatic injury, infectious disease, and parasites, while increasing the risk for unmasking some stress-related disorders if the environment is not enriched. If you decid to make your outdoor cat indoor-only, the following guidelines will help to ease the transition.

Set up a refuge with all of the resources the cat needs, food and water bowls, a perch (preferably near a window so that she can look outside), a place to sleep, hiding places (brown paper bags or cardboard boxes), a scratching post and toys (see Pg 5 for detailed description of **refuge**). This will help your cat get used to you and the experience of being indoors. The refuge will be the cat's home for a while. Make sure that you visit him often and leave a radio on while he is alone in the room. If there are no other pets in the home then you may leave the door to the refuge open. If there are other pets please refer to the section on Introducing New Pets. Let the cat venture out when he is ready. Keep all doors to the outside closed. The cat has been accustomed to being outdoors and may try to get back out. It is essential that the indoor environment be as interesting as possible. Place perches near windows so the cat can look out.

Perches should be two to three feet tall so the cat can look down on his surroundings. Provide scratching posts at several locations so the cat can exercise his instinct to scratch.

Set aside a play time each day. Use interactive toys such as laser pointers and feather teasers to play with the cat (you can find out what kind of toys your cat might prefer by visiting Identifying Your Cat's "prey" Preference (see **What Indoor Cats Need – Identifying Prey** section). When you are out, give the cat a choice of toys to play with. Change the toys every few days to keep the cat interested. Hide tasty treats around the house so the cat can hunt for them.

Despite your best efforts, your cat may still have a strong desire to return to the outdoors. To discourage your cat from dashing out when doors are opened, you can try to make doors seem less appealing. Do this by spraying the cat with a water bottle or rattling a can of pennies if he goes too near an entry door. Citrus scent may also be sprayed on or near the door to keep the cat away. The goal is not to punish the cat, but to associate the door with something unpleasant.

You also can let the cat safely enjoy a little of the great outdoors by training him to wear a harness and take him for leash walks, or by letting him out onto a sun porch or screened enclosure.

Bringing a Previously Stray Cat Indoors

Stray cats are domestic cats that have been abandoned or have strayed from home and become lost. Strays have known human companionship and can usually be re-socialized and adopted successfully. A stray cat may be comfortable approaching you and allowing you to pet it and will return to your door if food is left out. In contrast, feral cats are cats that have lived their whole life with little or no human contact. Adult feral cats avoid humans and cannot be re-socialized. They are more content living outdoors. Attempting to trap a cat that is feral presents a serious injury risk for inexperienced handlers. For more information on in helping feral cats your area please visit Alley Cat Allies www.alleycat.org/resources.html.

The first step in adopting a stray cat is to visit your veterinarian. Visit your vet before you bring the cat into contact with your family and pets. The cat should have a physical exam, be tested for feline leukemia and feline immunodeficiency virus, be vaccinated for feline distemper and rabies, and be de-wormed. Intact cats should be spayed or neutered. A thorough veterinary exam is important to protect your family and other animals in the household from infectious disease.

To introduce the new cat follow the same guidelines as those for making an outdoor cat indoor-only (see **Making Your Outdoor Cat Indoor-Only**). Be patient, and keep the cat happy and busy to help her to re-adjust to human companions and indoor living.

Free Access Crate Training (FACT)

FACT is an alternative way to provide a refuge for your cat. FACT is similar to crate-training for dogs. The cat accepts the crate or carrier as her own safe haven. For cats, the carrier should be big enough to hold bedding, food and water bowls, and a litter box big enough for the cat. Place the carrier in a quiet and secure place in the house, for example your bedroom. Cats prefer to be at a height where they can look down on their surroundings. Putting the carrier on a bench or dresser may make it more attractive to the cat. For cats that already associate the carrier with scary experiences (like trips to the vet) you can start out slowly. First, put the carrier in a place where the cat usually rests. Take off the top and the door. Put the cat's favorite blanket in the bottom of the carrier. Create positive associations with the carrier by playing with, petting, and feeding the cat near the carrier. Once she accepts this, attach the top of the carrier and let her get used to it too. Once the cat accepts both the top and the bottom, then add the door. If the cat is reluctant to use the carrier, applying Feliway spray may make her more comfortable.

FACT not only provides the cat with a refuge in your home, but allows the cat to take her personal space with her everywhere she goes. Veterinary visits, boarding, travel, and moving to a new home are easier because the cat feels secure in her space. Having her own space also makes the cat less likely to feel the need to compete with other animals for territory and may help decrease fighting and urine marking. For more detailed information on FACT please visit: www.mmilani.com

√ The Veterinarian

Taking Your Cat to the Veterinarian

Imagine how you would feel if someone suddenly picked you up, put you in a box, took you for a ride in strange vehicle, and then let an unknown person in a white coat probe your most delicate areas and stick needles into you! That is what the experience of going to the veterinarian seems like to cats. There are steps you can take to make this a less frightening experience for your cat.

Get your cat used to her cat carrier well before her veterinary appointment. Leave the open carrier sitting out so that she can explore it on her own. Place catnip or treats in the carrier to get her to look inside. You can even leave the carrier out permanently as a bed or hiding place for the cat (see Free Access Crate Training).

Get the cat used to going for rides in the carrier. Put her into the carrier with a special treat and drive around the block a few times. The cat will be less fearful if she sees that a ride in the carrier does not always end at the vet's office. She will also get more accustomed to riding in the car. When the cat is riding in your car, turn the stereo down to a low volume, roll up the windows and turn on the air vents. Too much noise from the stereo or the road can frighten the cat. Never put your cat into a hot car or leave her there unattended for any length of time!

Attempt to make the trip to the vet a positive experience. Give the cat special treats or toys at the vet's office. Schedule appointments at the least busy time of day and call ahead to make sure the vet is running on time. Sitting in a crowded waiting room with barking dogs and crying children will only create more

anxiety for your cat. If your cat is very fearful of dogs you can go to a clinic that only sees cats.

When you bring the cat home, make sure that the cat's refuge is available. Cats recognize one another by smell. When your cat returns home, other cats may treat her as an outsider because she smells like the vet's office. You may need to slowly reintroduce her to avoid conflict (see Introducing a New Cat).

In an emergency you may need to take the cat to the vet without the opportunity to prepare her. In this case you can wrap her in a towel and place her in the carrier.

When Your Cat is Hospitalized

If your cat needs to be hospitalized, visit her as often as the clinic allows. Make sure the cat has a refuge available when she comes home. Cats recognize one another by scent. When your cat returns home, other cats may treat her as an outsider because she smells like the hospital. You may need to slowly reintroduce her to avoid conflict (see **Introducing a New Cat**).

When Your Cat is Sick or Recovering at Home

If your cat is not feeling well you should always consult your veterinarian. For minor illnesses the veterinarian may prescribe medicine and treatments to be given at home. Alternatively, the cat may be returning home to recover after being hospitalized. The cat will need to rest quietly at home. Provide her with a refuge and don't allow other pets into that room. Make sure that human family members also respect the privacy of the refuge.

One person should be assigned as the primary caregiver for the cat while she is sick. That person should spend quiet time with the cat. Don't try to handle her too much unless she is receptive. Carefully follow the veterinarian's instructions for administering medicine. Be gentle with the cat when medicating her and give her treats and praise to help make it a positive experience. If your cat is not good at taking medicine, ask the veterinarian about having the medicine compounded in a flavored base such as fish or chicken.

✓ Traveling with Your Cat

Traveling with your cat does not have to be a terrible experience. With a little thought and preparation it can go smoothly for everyone involved. For long trips, ask your veterinarian about medication to calm or sedate the cat to make her more comfortable. If you will be traveling out of the state or country you should check with your local health department to see if a health certificate or other documentation is required for the cat.

It is always best for your cat to travel in a cat carrier. Get your cat used to her cat carrier well before your date of



departure. Leave the open carrier sitting out so that she can explore it on her own. Place catnip or treats in the carrier to get her to look inside. You can even leave the carrier out permanently as a bed or hiding place for the cat (see **Free Access Crate Training**).

Traveling by Car

Get the cat used to going for rides in the carrier. Put her into the carrier with a special treat and drive around the block a few times a few times a week. This will help her to get accustomed to riding in the car. When the cat is riding in your car, turn the stereo down to a low volume, roll up the windows and turn on the air vents to keep it cool inside. Too much noise from the stereo or the road will frighten the cat. Never put your cat into a hot car or leave her there unattended for any length of time!

If you will be driving a long distance you will need to bring along food, water, and a litter box for the cat. A clean litter box can travel easily on the floor of your car or in the back of your SUV or minivan. Disposable cardboard litter boxes are also available and are convenient for travel.

Traveling by Plane

Some airlines will allow you bring your cat aboard as a "carry-on" in a soft-sided carrier. If that is not an option choose an airline that provides safe and humane handling for traveling pets. Check with the airline to see what is required for your cat's flight. For more information please visit the

American Veterinary Medical Association

(http://www.avma.org/careforanimals/animatedjourneys/livingwithpets/traveling .asp).

4. Problem Solving

✓ How to Clean Up Cat Urine

The key to success is to thoroughly clean the area, as soon as possible.

Carpet:

- 1. Get some paper towels and blot up as much as you can as soon as you are first aware the cat used the area.
- 2. Cover the area with a towel or a pile of paper towels and stand on them. You may have to do this several times.
- 3. When you have soaked up as much as you possibly can, get out the carpet cleaner or use a few drops of dish detergent mixed with water. Saturate the area with this, and just let it sit on the area for an hour or two. No scrubbing
- 4. Rinse the area by gently blotting. Wet a sponge with tap water and rinse the area again.
- 5. Soak the area with club soda and leave it on the carpet for ten minutes.
- 6. Blot up the club soda and place fresh paper towels or a fresh towel over the area.
- 7. Weigh down the towels with something heavy, e.g., books, furniture, etc., and leave overnight.
- 8. In the morning, spray the area with an enzymatic cleaner. There are many on the market; we carry F.O.N. (Feline Odor Neutralizer), A.O.E. (Animal Odor Eliminator), K.O.E. (Kennel Odor Eliminator), F.E.O. (Feline Elimin Odor), and "Equalizer," a foaming carpet cleaner at The OSU Veterinary Hospital. You will need to follow the directions for the individual enzymatic cleaner.
- 9. Never use ammonia or ammonia- based products on the carpet. The smell may attract the cat to that area and can encourage cats to urinate in the area.
- 10. Keep the cat away from the area.
- 11. If the smell is bad and the cat continues to use this area despite all the cleaning, it may be necessary to replace the padding underneath and clean the area under the carpet.

Linoleum:

- 1. Wipe up the puddle with paper towels or a mop soaked in soapy water.
- 2. Clean area thoroughly and rinse with warm water, then wipe the area with a sponge dampened with white vinegar.
- 3. Let the area air- dry.

Hardwood and Cement:

1. Blot up as much liquid as you can, then use an enzymatic cleaner.

2. If the smell is strong, or if the floor is stained, it may be necessary to sand and refinish the hardwood floor.

Laundry:

- 1. Machine-wash your laundry using a cup of white vinegar and no detergent.
- 2. When the laundry cycle finishes, add detergent and wash regularly.

✓ Spraying and Marking

Mine! Mine! Mine!

Cats that eliminate outside their box are not being spiteful, or necessarily even upset. They may just need to be reassured. The first thing to do when this occurs is to make sure that your cat does not have a medical problem. If the veterinarian verifies that your cat is fine, then think about what is going on in his life. First give him lots of attention.

Some things that could cause your cat to spray or mark are bringing home something new such as another cat, dog, baby, or furniture. If it's another pet, then introduce them *slowly* (See Preventing Problems – Introducing New Pets). Your cat will need lots of your attention to accept this change. If you bring home a new family member (See Preventing Problems – Comings and Goings), have your cat acclimate to the smells and sounds that accompany them. Still, make sure that you give them lots of attention.

"I am a creature of habit. I like having my own space, my own toys, and my own stuff. Now I will share, but I do need something that is mine to be happy. If I think something that belongs to me is being taken over by someone else, including you, my owner, I will feel threatened. So I will answer a threat sometimes. I have to let everyone know that this is mine. The natural way to do this is to claim what is mine is to mark it with urine. This is like writing my name on my things. Sometimes just putting my scent on something or in a certain area will make me feel secure, especially if I feel out of place, nervous or fearful."



If there are cats outside, they may be in your yard,

marking your yard: saying

"This is **mine**; you can't have it!"

Your cat will want to let the cats out there know that *this is mine* by peeing on windows, glass doors, and anywhere the intruder will notice. One way to alleviate this problem is to prevent the from cats coming onto your property. Find out who they belong to and tell their owners so they can keep them closer to their home. If they are strays, call a local humane society or install a motion-sensing sprinkler. If the cats cannot be kept away, you may be able to block your cat's

vision of them. Place newspaper, foil or reflective tape over the window so they cannot be seen. Your cat will not spray unless he feels like he *has* to.

After figuring out the source for your cat's frustration and need to mark, it will be important to clean the areas that were marked with a special enzymatic cleaner that is particularly made to take away the scent. If your cat continues to smell her mark there, she may continue to mark it. It may be necessary to keep your cat away from that area for a while, 'out of sight, out of mind.' There is also a natural pheromone spray called Feliway (See Feliway box...), which can be very calming to some cats and reduces the urge to spray and mark. If you spray this around the areas that were marked because your cat was uneasy, it may calm them down.

✓ Introducing New Pets

See section on **Preventing Problems – New Pets**.

√ Separation Anxiety

Some single indoor-housed cats become anxious when left alone for long periods of time. These cats appear to be unusually sensitive to their surroundings, and may be very attached to their owners.

Here are some signs of "separation anxiety" in cats:

- Excessive vocalization (crying, moaning, meowing)
- Not eating or drinking while owner is away
- Eliminating (often urinations) in inappropriate places
- Vomiting, food or hair is often contained in the vomit
- Excessive self-grooming
- Destructive behavior
- Exuberant greetings when the owner returns home

If your cat seems to be showing signs of separation anxiety, here are some things you can do:

- Provide perches so the cat can look outside.
- Toys, toys and toys (See Indoor Cat Needs Toys & Prey Preference)
- Let your cat "hunt" for food by placing food in a toy that will make the cat work to get the food out.
- Hide food throughout the house so the cat has to find it.
- Leave the radio or TV on, tuned to your usual station.
- Call home and leave a message for the cat.
- Provide a refuge (see Pg 5 for detailed description of **refuge**)
- Spend at least 10 minutes daily playing with your cat.

You can find out more about separation anxiety in cats at www.petplace.com.

If the cat still has problems after you have enriched the environment and instituted daily playtime, please see your veterinarian for further advice.

✓ Conflict Between Cats

Cats react quickly when their feelings of safety are threatened. Some become aggressive, some become withdrawn, and some become sick. In our experience, conflict is the most common reason that some health problems occur in multiple indoor-cat households. Conflict among cats can develop because of threats to their status or rank in the home, from other animals in the home, or from outside cats. With a little practice, you can recognize the signs of conflict and find out if it is a problem for your cats. If it is, you usually can identify the causes. Once this has been done, you are well on



your way to reducing the conflict. Of course, some conflict between housemates is normal, regardless of species. Our goal is to reduce unhealthy conflict to a more manageable level for the cats involved.

The Signs of Silent Conflict			
The assertive cat	The threatened cat		
Never backs away from other cats	Spends large amounts of time hiding or away from the family		
Stares at other cats	Avoids eye contact with other cats		
Denies other cats access to resources	Yields resources to other cats		
Rub cheeks, head, chin, and tail on people, doorways, and furniture at cat height.			
When it sees the victim:	When it sees the assertive cat:		
Lowers its head and neck while elevating its hindquarters and stalks the other cat.	Crouches, may then flee		
The hair along its back, on its tail and tail base may stand on end			
Growls	Does not vocalize		
May spray	May spray		
	May develop cystitis or other disease problem.		

Signs of conflict between cats can be open or silent. Signs of open conflict are easy to recognize; the cats may stalk each other, hiss, and turn sideways with legs straight and hair standing on end up to make themselves look larger. If neither backs down, the displays may increase to swatting, wrestling, and biting. The signs of silent conflict can be so subtle they are easily missed. The cat creating the conflict can be identified as the one that never backs away from other cats, denies other cats access to resources, stares at other cats, and lowers

its head and neck while elevating its hindquarters as it approaches less confident cats. The hair along its back, on its tail and tail base may stand on end, although not to the extent of cats engaged in open conflict, and it may emit a low growl. The cat creating the conflict eventually may only have to approach or stare at another cat for it to leave a resource such as food or a litter box. If the threatened cat tries to use the resource later, the more confident cat's presence alone may be enough to make it flee. Threatened cats often spend increasingly large amounts of time away from the family, in areas of the house that others do not use, or spend time with the owners only when the more confident cat is elsewhere.

The *signs* of conflict can result from three *types* of conflict; offensive, defensive, and re-directed. In offensive conflict, the more confident cat moves closer to the other cats to control the interaction. In defensive conflict situations, a cat tries to increase the distance between itself and something it perceives as a threat. In re-directed conflict, the threatened cat may not defend itself from the more confident cat, but become threatening to a less threatening cat. Although cats engaged in any type of conflict may spray or eliminate outside the litter box, we find that threatened cats are most likely to develop cystitis.

The most common cause of conflict between indoor-housed cats is competition for resources. Cats may engage in open or silent conflict over space, food, water, litter boxes, perches, sunny areas, safe places where the cat can watch its environment, or attention from people. There may be no apparent threat to access to these resources for conflict to develop. The change may only be the cat's perceptions of how much control it wants over the environment or its housemates' behaviors.

Open conflict is most likely to occur when a new cat is introduced into the house, and when cats that have known each other since kittenhood reach social maturity. Conflict occurring when a new cat is introduced is easy to understand, and good directions are available for introducing the new cat to the current residents. Owners may be puzzled by conflict that starts when one of their cats becomes socially mature, or when a socially mature cat perceives that one of its housemates is becoming socially mature. Cats can become socially mature anytime between 2 and 5 years of age, and start to take some control of the social groups and their activities. This may lead to open conflict between males, between females, or between males and females. Although owners may be surprised, "because they lived so well together for the first few years of their lives!", cat's perceptions of resource needs may expand with social maturity.

Cats that are familiar with each other but unevenly matched often show conflict in more subtle ways. One of the cats in the conflict asserts itself, and another cat is threatened by this cat's actions. Silent conflicts may not even be recognized until the threatened cat begins to hide from the assertive cat, to hiss or fight back when it sees the other cat, to start threatening other cats, or when it develops a health problem.

In addition to the signs of conflict described above, the assertive cat can be identified by its marking behavior. These cats rub their cheeks, head, chin, and tail on people, doorways, and furniture at cat height. Unfortunately, silent conflict

can also involve urine; including marking by the assertive or the threatened cat, and cystitis by the threatened cat. Conflict-related urine marking can include spraying, when the cat treads and kneads, raises its tail, and flicks the tip of it while spraying urine on a vertical surface or squatting and urinating outside the litter box (non-spray marking). Both males and females may spray, and while neutering reduces the frequency of spraying, it cannot eliminate the behavior. Conflict-related urine marking can be exhibited by either the aggressor or the victim, but in our experience, cystitis usually occurs in the victim. We have even seen threatened male cats spray bloody urine! Cats that urinate on bedspreads or other elevated, open places may be doing so if their access to the litter box is threatened by another cat, or when they are afraid to use the box because it is placed such that a quick escape from another cat would not be possible.

Treatment for conflict between cats involves providing a separate set of resources for each cat, preferably in locations where the cats can use them without being seen by other cats. This lets the cats avoid each other if they choose to without being deprived of an essential resource. Conflict also can be reduced by neutering all of the cats, and by keeping all nails trimmed as short as possible. Whenever the cats involved in the conflict can not be directly supervised, they may need to be separated. This may mean that two of three cats in the household can stay together, but that the victim of the conflict is provided a refuge from the other cats. This room should contain all necessary resources for the cat staying in it.

Cats generally require and use more space than the average house or apartment affords them. The addition of three-dimensional spaces such as kitty condos, cardboard boxes, beds, or crates may provide enough space to reduce conflict to a tolerable level. In severe situations, some cats may benefit from behavior-modifying medications. In our experience, however, medication may help after environmental enrichment has occurred, but it cannot replace it.

The cats involved in the conflict may never be "best friends", but they usually can live together without showing signs of conflict or conflict-related diseases. Once the situation is under control, a behaviorist may be consulted for assistance in desensitizing and counter conditioning of cats in conflict so they can share the same spaces more comfortably if this is desired.

Resolving conflict with other animals, dogs, children, or adults is more straightforward. In addition to being solitary hunters of small prey, cats are small prey themselves for other carnivores, including dogs. Regardless of how sure we are that our dog will not hurt our cat, to the cat the dog is a predator. If the cat does not assert dominance over the dog, which often happens, it must be provided ways to escape at any time. For humans, it usually suffices to teach children and guests that cats may not understand rough treatment as play, but as a predatory threat.

Most cats in urban areas in the United States are housed indoors and neutered, so conflict with outside cats can occur when a new cat enters the area around the house the affected cat lives in. To cats, windows are no protection from a threatening cat outside. If cats roaming outside are the source of the problem, a variety of strategies (www.ddfl.org/behavior/roaming_cats.htm) and

products (www.havahart.com/nuisance/cats/cat_repellents.htm) to make your garden less desirable to them are available.

Increasing the Activity of Your Cat Why play with your cat?

- To develop a bond with your cat.
- To increase the quality of life of your cat.
- To help improve behavior and health, reduce the incidence of obesity, and prevent future problems.
- To make your cat active during the day so that they will sleep longer and bother you less during the night.



- To help your cat vent excess energy, which should decrease the "wild frenzies" that often occur, especially in the late evenings.
- To teach your cat to play in a controlled environment and decrease the likeliness that they will "play bite" or attack you or others.

Helpful hints

- Do not reward bad behavior with play. Only elicit play when your cat is calm, quiet, and behaving appropriately.
- Do not use your hands, fingers, or other body parts as toys, or kitty will learn to bite and scratch them. Stop play that gets too rough, and resume when your cat is calm, quiet, and behaving appropriately.
- Set aside a specific time each day and make play time a part of your daily schedule. Your cat will be less anxious the rest of the day in anticipation of your special play time.
- Ask family members to participate in the fun and share the responsibility of cat ownership.

Ideas for increasing your cat's activity

- Teach your cat to play fetch. Attach a favorite toy to a line, throw the toy, and reel it back in as needed. Your cat may learn to bring the toy back to you because they are rewarded when you throw the toy again!
- Attach a toy to a shoelace and drag it around the house. Don't forget to drag it onto high locations where your cat is allowed to climb. Many cats will chase it wherever it goes! A shoelace with a knot at the end also works, especially for those bug-lovers!
- Help your cat push a ball around on a smooth surface, such as hard floors or in a bathtub.
- Encourage your cat to run back and forth between you and another person by providing a reward when they reach each of you. You can use a treat or a favorite toy as the reward, but don't forget to reward!

- Throw a piece of dry cat food or a treat across the floor. Watch kitty chase it every time!
- Hang a toy by a string from a doorknob or use a hanger on top of a doorway. Help make it interesting for your cat by giving it a shake to make it move.
- Place a paper bag or cardboard box onto the floor. When your cat goes inside to explore, scratch the outside with your finger and they will try to catch you!
- Hide a toy under a cushion or blanket. Make it move and entice your cat to dig for it.
- Take advantage of any object your cat likes to play with by making it move!
- Many cats will chase a laser pointer for hours. Make sure you do not point
 the laser in the eyes of any people or animals. You may consider
 discontinuing its use if your cat becomes anxious or paranoid about seeing
 the laser when it is not turned on.
- If your cat is confident and easy-going, try playing hide-and-seek. Pretend to hide, and peek out frequently. Allow your cat to watch you sneak to closer hiding spots. Finally, come out of your final hiding spot and tickle your cat. If your cat enjoys the game, they will hide and then pursue you! Try not to startle your cat, and always finish the game with calm interaction.

Whatever toy or game your cat enjoys; try not to use up all of the fun at once. Resist the temptation to leave kitty's favorite toys out all day. Instead, leave a few toys out during the day, but only bring out the favorites once a day or even once a week. They will remain fun for much longer!