



# Owning a Cat Educational Guide

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## Preparing Your Home

When preparing your cat's new surroundings, be sure to have a litter box ready for use upon arrival. We recommend using Dr. Elsey's Cat Attract™ litter to ease the transition from shelter to home. For a safe trip in the car, purchase a cat carrier for transportation and future visits to the vet. Place out water and clean **protein**™ in non-plastic bowls, but hold off on any overstimulation like toys while your cat takes in their new setting. Remember to keep doors and all windows closed to avoid an unexpected trip outside, and be sure to have a collar and proper identification tags ready for when new kitty arrives home.

### Catproofing

Much like baby-proofing a home, it's essential to take into consideration your new cat's safety before their arrival. Check your home for any plants or items that could be harmful to your cat. Common flowers such as lilies, baby's breath, daffodils and carnations are all considered poisonous to cats — and sometimes a little *too* tempting to chew. Human food, medications, household cleaners and small objects like rubber bands and electrical cords should all be kept away from surfaces or areas of the home that are easily accessible to your cat.



## Meeting Your Cat

As tempting as it may be to make the first move when meeting your new cat, it's important to let the cat come to you. Remember to approach slowly and talk softly as not to startle your new feline friend. Get low and extend an open hand for sniffing. If they're comfortable, you can then go for a scratch on the forehead, chin or cheeks. A cat's cheeks contain scent glands that, when rubbed, release pheromones that can help calm your cat. That's why they love rubbing their cheeks on the side of furniture or your legs! If you're interested in breaking the ice to test your cat's playful side, bring along a toy to ease their anxiety and make them feel relaxed.

### Cheat Sheet to Feline Body Language

Ears Moving Up, Down or Sideways → **Uncertain**

Tail Straight Up or Back → **Friendly**

Tail Fluffed Out → **Scared or Angry**

Tail Curled → **Friendly or Inquisitive**

Tail Tucked Under → **Frightened**

Tail Swishing → **Angry or Hunting**

Rolled Over with Stomach Exposed → **Relaxed**

## Bringing Home Kitty

Bringing a new cat or kitten into your home can be an unfamiliar situation for experienced owners and new adopters alike. We're here to offer a few helpful hints that will make the transition easier on you, your new cat and any other furry friends in your household. Keep in mind that the slower the introduction period, the better the chance of your cat adjusting to new surroundings. Cats tend to feel more secure in a smaller space when they enter a new environment. We recommend creating a safe, quiet room where your new cat can acclimate for the first few days. During your cat's acclimation at home, visit the veterinarian for a post-adoption checkup.

After establishing a routine with your new cat, you can begin an introduction to the others living in your household. If you have children or other animals, supervise a gentle interaction allowing the cat plenty of space to retreat or climb to safety if they feel overwhelmed.

### Cat Cohabitation

If you're introducing your new cat or kitten to a resident household cat, take extra precaution with introductions. During their initial separation, you can help them acclimate to the other's smell by wiping each cat's fur with a towel and placing the towel under the other's food bowl. This will help them get used to the other's smell in a pleasant environment. After a while, switch their places by letting the new cat explore the whole house while the existing cat spends time alone. When they're finally ready to cohabitate, try setting up a dinner date for two. Feed them on either side of a partially closed door, with an opening big enough to see and smell each other. This association between food and the other's presence can help to calm any lingering anxieties with the pleasurable activity of eating. When you finally let them meet under supervision, make sure to have enough elevated perches that one can get away from the other if necessary.

Always remember to have one cat box for each cat plus one. This will help with any territory issues between the cats. Separate food bowls for each cat can also be helpful. If you have multiple cats, it is always a good idea to zone their litter boxes and food bowls, so they each have their own space.







## Power Behind Protein

The right diet can go a long way for your cat. That's why Dr. Elsey's cleanprotein™ is the ideal addition to your feline toolkit. Inspired by the protein levels found in natural prey, cleanprotein™ is 100% grain-free and gluten-free, and over 90% of the protein is animal-based. Available in a variety of formulas, cleanprotein™ kibble and recipe pâté were designed to promote a healthy and active lifestyle for all cats through simple, high-quality ingredients.

The primary ingredients in Dr. Elsey's cleanprotein™ are among the highest biological value proteins available. Many competitive foods use plant-based proteins such as grains, vegetables and fruits, leading to rapid metabolism which only increases your cat's hunger. Protein is metabolized slower than other nutrients, resulting in an appetite that is satisfied longer and a healthy weight that is easier to maintain.

A protein-rich diet can help prevent calcium oxalate crystals and bladder stones in your cat. An instinctive diet does not include plants with high oxalate levels – oxalates have been linked to kidney damage and kidney cell death. Dr. Elsey's cleanprotein™ has an ingredient profile with no-to-low oxalates by excluding plants commonly found in competitive diets. Additionally, low glycemic ingredients may reduce or eliminate the need for insulin in diabetic cats.

## Litter Box Lowdown

Inappropriate elimination is the number one behavioral reason cats are abandoned or surrendered to shelters. Dr. Elsey's goal is to help keep cats in loving homes by providing proven, veterinarian-formulated solutions. We know there are certain dilemmas cat owners run into from time to time that can be uncomfortable to ask about. We've compiled answers to all the potty problems you may face to keep your fussy feline happy, healthy and coming back to the box.

### Maintaining a Healthy Litter Box

We recommend replacing litter boxes every 6 to 12 months to promote a healthy use for your cat. Litter boxes can become scratched and permeated with urine odor, even when washing them with mild soap and hot water, so it's good to change out boxes on a regular basis. Here are some helpful tips for a happy and hygienic box:

- Litter boxes should be at least one and a half the size of your cat.
- Large clear storage boxes make excellent cat litter boxes. If you cut a doorway in the middle of the box, leaving around an inch and a half on each side to provide stability and a lip of about three and a half inches to hold in the litter, you can create a large box for your cat to use.
- Your cat should be able to step in and out of the box with ease and be able to turn around.
- Senior cats can have litter box issues simply because it's difficult for them to step in and out if the sides of the box are too high.
- Location of the litter box is important as well – don't place your cat's litter box in a loud laundry room or cold basement. Setting the box in a warm, dry and quiet place is key.
- Make sure you have a dedicated box for each cat in your household to use and avoid placing the boxes side-by-side.
- When it comes to clean up, removing feces and urine clumps daily from the litter box, washing the box with mild soap and water and replacing the litter once a month will keep your cat happy and your home odor-free.
- Stay away from using any harsh chemicals to clean out your box – cats do not like the smell and this may discourage them from using the box.

### Cleaning Up Cat Urine

If you discover a dreaded urine stain on your duvet or seat cushion, don't fret! First, machine-wash your laundry using a cup of white vinegar and no detergent. When the laundry cycle finishes, add detergent and wash regularly. White vinegar is a great product for cleaning laundry and hard surfaces like linoleum and tile. If you do not remove all the urine odor, there will be a tendency for your cat to continue to urinate in those same areas over and over again. Cleaning up old urine odors is essential for getting a cat to go back to their litter box again.



For stains on the carpet, we recommend a three-step program beginning with cleaning the area with a mixture of mild dish detergent and water. Saturate the area with this solution and let it sit for an hour or two before blotting the area with tap water to rinse. Do not rub your carpet as to preserve the natural carpet texture. Next, soak the area with club soda for ten minutes and then blot the club soda with fresh paper towels over the area. Weigh down the paper towels with a heavy object and let dry overnight. The next day, apply Dr. Elsey's Urine Removal Program. Mix the Urine Removal Program one part solution to seven parts distilled water. Saturate the area with the mixture and allow the solution to remain in the carpet to dry.

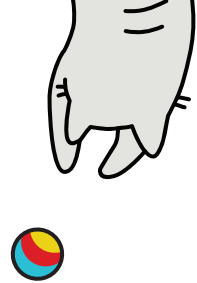
### **Long-Haired Cat Problems**

Cat owners find themselves in some hairy situations from time to time. Litter can stick to a long-haired cat's rear area, and as a result, they will not use the litter box to defecate. As one could imagine, long-haired cats do not like litter and feces adhering to their rear area so they may decide to go elsewhere to defecate than in the box. We recommend that you have a hygiene clip done around the rear area of your cat. If your cat has long hair in-between the digits of their toes, then it's also a good idea to trim that hair as well. By trimming these areas, your long-haired cat will be free of the hair that may be an issue with using the litter box. Dr. Elsey's Long Haired Litter will not adhere to your cat's long fur, and will not color their coat.

### **Territorial Marking**

Territorial marking, or marking with urine, is different behavior than sitting to urinate. With territorial marking, you will see small amounts of urine on walls, furniture, against baseboards and even on the owner's clothes or bedding. After the cat has marked, it will simply walk away and not sniff and paw at the area as is the case with sitting to urinate in litter.

Often cats will mark with urine if they are under stress from other cats in the household or neighborhood that may be invading what the cat perceives as its territory. If this is the case, it is important to try to keep stray cats away from your house. For the cats inside it is a good idea to zone the litter boxes and food bowls, so each cat has their own space. Giving cats their own zone will help with any territory issues that may arise between cats in the household. Comfort Zone® Calming Diffusers can help reduce stress response behaviors like destructive scratching and urine marking. They release calming pheromones that mimic cats' natural, calming pheromones for up to 30 days, signaling to your cat that he or she is in a safe and familiar place.



## Playtime Pointers

There are countless creative ways to make your home purr-fect for playtime with your cat, and we want to help you start with the basics. Playtime, downtime, anytime — we want your cats to be healthy and happy as they live a satisfying and natural “indoor” life. When done regularly, play is the best tool for bonding, socializing and training.

Cats need to maintain their natural behaviors such as scratching, hunting, stalking and chewing while living indoors. If deprived of appropriate environmental outlets for these behaviors, they may develop health and behavioral problems. Simply think of what he or she would do if they were living out in the wild, and look for activities that fulfill their natural instincts right from inside your home. Here are some helpful tips for satisfying the cat crazies:

- Since cats stalk and chase their prey in the wild, food puzzles and hiding food help a cat work for their food and can provide beneficial enrichment by satisfying their hunting instinct.
- Provide your cat with cardboard boxes to climb on and explore to emulate the act of climbing trees.
- Place a bed or blanket near a window so that your cat can observe the outdoors through sight, hearing and smell.
- Running water and pet drinking fountains may also be very appealing to cats.
- Place scratching posts next to your cat's sleeping areas. Many cats like to stretch and scratch upon waking.
- Rotate toys your cat can chase and stalk, so your cat does not become bored, and provide a food treat to reward them for their hunting behavior.
- When using an interactive toy such as a feather wand or a mouse on a string, move the toy like the prey it's supposed to represent.
- Timing is everything. Playtime before dinner can encourage a good appetite, and a play session before bed can help your cat sleep through the night.
- It's important to let your cat “catch” the prey during the play session. Otherwise, your cat may become frustrated and stop playing or act out in response to unfulfilled urges.
- Never use your fingers as prey. It might be cute to have a kitten batting and biting at your fingers, but it's much more difficult to train an adult cat out of this behavior than to prevent it.
- Create positive alternatives to bad behavior. If you have an ankle-attacking cat, use a toy as a distraction as soon as you see they are hunting your legs. If your cat is a door darter, get their attention with a toy and toss it in the opposite direction as you're about to leave.



## Importance of Indoors

Did you know less than 5% of cats that escape their homes are returned? With birds, bees and the occasional squirrel tempting your cat to the great outdoors, the risk is high that your four-legged friend will slink outside for an afternoon in the sun. Once they've fled from home, a single distraction can take them minutes to miles away from eyesight. Cats that aren't adequately tagged are stolen, ignored, placed in shelters or ultimately euthanized.

### Our Solution

The glamour of outdoors is tempting for any feline. If they do successfully strut away from their loving home, Dr. Elsey's wants to help them get home safely. Our orange cat collar campaign is meant to raise awareness of lost cats and help keep them safe until they are reunited with their home. Find an orange breakaway collar in specially marked 40-lb bags of Dr. Elsey's Ultra Cat litter. When you spot a cat wearing orange outside, it means they've lost their way. Help return lost kitties home by spreading the word and alerting your local animal rescues. If you can approach the lost cat safely, check its collar and I.D. tags. Help us reunite more lost cats with their families by spreading the word with #orangeinside.



## Kitten Care

While a seasonal forecast of tiny cats might sound like a cuteness overload, kitten season can be a hectic time for animal shelters trying to manage the influx of kittens being born and brought in. Typically lasting between April and October, kitten season occurs during the warmer months when female cats are often giving birth to litters. There may be a number of you welcoming kittens into your homes for the first time, but don't be a scaredy cat! We've compiled information that will help make the transition easier on you and any other cats in your household.

### Welcome Home Kitten

Once adopted and on their own away from the litter, kittens need to feel warm with a sense of security. Find a quiet place within your home to place a cat bed or cardboard box lined with a blanket for your new kitten to nest in. For a safe trip home, purchase a cat carrier for transportation and future visits to the vet. Hold off on any overstimulation like toys while your kitten takes in their new surroundings, they could be a little frazzled!



### **Importance of Indoors**

Remember to keep doors and windows closed to avoid an unexpected trip outside, and be sure to have a collar and proper identification tags ready for when your kitten arrives home. Teaching your kitten to stay indoors while they're young will establish life as an indoor cat and help to avoid developing a preference for the outdoors as they grow. Remember Dr. Elsey's #orangeinside campaign and don't forget you can score an orange collar for your kitten by purchasing a specially marked bag of our 40-lb Dr. Elsey's Ultra litter.

### **Feeding Time**

When your kitten first arrives home, be sure to place out water and cleanprotein™ in non-plastic bowls. After being weaned off of milk, an introduction to soft foods like cleanprotein™ recipe paté is best, slowly introducing cleanprotein™ kibble over time. Food fuels growth, so keep in mind a kitten's diet requires up to two times the recommended daily feeding amount for kibble, and up to two and a half times the recommended amount for paté. Your kitten will continue to gain weight rapidly until 6 to 7 months of age. After that, weight gain will continue slowly until about 10 months of age.

### **Housetraining**

Kittens will start to discover the litter box at about four to five weeks old, and this is when they will go through an oral or "litter tasting" stage. During this period, it is best to use a non-clumping litter like conventional clay litters. At roughly eight weeks, when a kitten is weaned and eating on its own, you can then switch to Dr. Elsey's Kitten Attract. Kitten Attract contains a natural herbal attractant that piques a kitten's interest in using the litter box, and is also soft and comfortable on small kitten paws.

### **Pint-Sized Play**

Kitten claws are razor sharp and can be used to defend themselves, mark territory, climb and play. To keep yourself and your furniture out of harm's way, introduce your kitten to a scratching post made of carpet or cardboard. Investing in your kitten's amusement can prevent damage and frustration while creating an enriching environment for your new kitten to play in. Using your hands and feet instead of toys during playtime may teach your kitten that rough play is acceptable. Alternatively, counter this behavior by using fishing pole-type toys or plush throwable toys for them to chase.

## Senior Cat Care

Have you noticed your furry companion starting to slow down during playtime? When your cat reaches the ripe old age of 10 years old, they are officially in the senior category of feline life, reaching their geriatric years after age 15. Senior cats are often the last to be adopted, but with a lifetime of learning to coexist with other animals behind them and having mastered the litter box, senior cats often need less behavioral monitoring than younger cats. While they may need cat naps more often than they used to, seniors are still kittens at heart.

### Disease Defense

As a cat owner, it is important to schedule regular visits with your veterinarian for your senior cat. Aging cats have an increased vulnerability to illness due to a weakening immune system. Even if your cat appears healthy, a yearly check-up is still imperative as many diseases can show no sign of symptoms.

Senior cats are more prone to have a urinary tract infection as a result of having more dilute urine and struggling to keep their genital areas clean. The growth of E-Coli bacteria on feces along with reduced natural body defenses in your senior cat can escalate to issues such as kidney failure over time. Dr. Elsey's Senior Litter offers owners a solution to contending with these issues through a litter that works to coat and dehydrate cat feces, reduce odor and prevent bacterial growth of E-Coli, while not sticking to the coat of your cat. Fine and soft in texture, Senior Litter consists of amorphous silica gel and is pleasing to cat's paws. It is safe if inhaled or ingested, and does not cause silicosis because it has no crystalline silica.

### Maintaining Muscle

Energy requirements for your feline friend progressively increase starting at 10–12 years of age. If daily caloric intake is not raised, progressive weight loss may result due to the loss of muscle mass in your cat. In the short digestive tract of cats, plant proteins are far less digestible than meat proteins. These issues are important when selecting a food for any cat, but they become of utmost importance when choosing a diet for the senior cat. Therefore, grain-based proteins should never be used as the primary protein source in aging cats. Senior cats absorb and metabolize protein less efficiently — therefore, it's essential to feed high-quality animal-based protein such as Dr. Elsey's cleanprotein™ to aging cats.

### **Cleanliness**

As your cat ages and loses flexibility, they will be less able to groom themselves efficiently. You may need to assist your cat with wiping away any goop around their eyes and nose, as well as any litter remnants that adhere to your cat's backside. For each separate area, moisten a cotton cloth in warm water and gently wipe away any grime. To avoid any areas of matted hair on your cat, brush them using a soft brush or fine comb in a gentle manner making sure to avoid any vigorous motions that could be painful. Brushing is the perfect time to check for any unusual lumps, bumps or sores on your cat that could merit a trip to the veterinarian. Elderly cats are less able to retract their claws, so it is recommended to regularly have your cat's nails trimmed to avoid getting caught in furniture or carpets.

### **Playtime**

Cats of all ages benefit from playtime. Maintaining natural behaviors such as scratching, hunting, stalking and chewing is important for a healthy and satisfying life indoors. Along with a stimulated mind, playtime for your senior cat can help burn excess calories and keep aging muscles and joints healthy. Due to arthritic movement, offering your senior cat horizontal scratching surfaces instead of traditional scratching posts can provide a source of exercise to the muscles of your cat's limbs. To accommodate your cat's loss of flexibility, try placing a large cardboard box on its side allowing your cat to walk in and investigate without having to jump.

### **Cat Naps**

A favorite activity of senior cats is curling up for a much-needed nap after an active play session or a long morning of bird watching. While cats enjoy raised surfaces for napping, such as a bed or window sill, it can become increasingly hard to reach these surfaces. Positioning a ramp or platform below your cat's preferred sleeping spot can create ease for their aging joints. To soften their spot and provide extra warmth, try adding a folded blanket to their nap zone. The additional padding can also help prevent any accidental falls due to impaired balance on slick surfaces.

### **Loss of Senses**

As your cat ages, they may have sight or hearing loss. When coping with the loss of these senses, it is important not to startle or disorient your cat. When approaching a cat with hearing problems, approach from the front rather than from behind to avoid alarming them. Similarly, if your cat suffers from vision problems, always call them by their name before approaching to announce yourself. Placing nightlights around your house can help cats with poor vision navigate in the dark. If your cat is blind, keeping items like the litter box and food bowls in a consistent spot can help your cat learn to navigate the home.

**More questions about our products? Visit our [FAQ page!](#)**

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