



Cats make great pets. Regal, beautiful animals, they often like to cuddle, they are fairly independent and they are a quiet addition to any family. Most cats live from 13-20 years, with indoor cats living much longer on average. Caring for your cat properly will ensure she enjoys a long, healthy, happy life as your companion.

## Cat Basics

All cats need good care to thrive. Make your cat a part of your family and ensure she has access to all of the following basics.

- Cats are carnivores and need daily protein in order to stay healthy. Find a cat food brand for your pet that's CVMA (Canadian Veterinary Medical Association) certified to provide your cat with all the nutrients it needs.
- Every living thing needs water to live. Provide your cat with water, and change it daily to keep the water clean and fresh.
- Indoor cats live longer, healthier lives than outdoor cats. By keeping your cat indoors, you can protect her from traffic, animals and other cats. Keeping your cat inside will also protect native songbird populations. Domestic cats kill more than 100 million birds a year in North America.
- All cats need exercise. Play games with your cat to keep her happy and mentally alert. Attach a toy to the end of a fishing rod or piece of string. Let your cat stalk and pounce.

### Keeping a Happy Cat

- If you're away from home during the day, consider getting a second companion cat to keep your cat company.
- Playing games with your cat is a great form of socialization. Play games where your cat can pretend she is hunting a mouse or a bird. Cats can get bored and depressed if they have nothing to do.
- Some cats are very friendly and others like to be left alone. Your cat depends on you for attention and love. Spending time with her will help develop your bond and reinforce her role as your companion.



### Safety

If you decide to let your cat outside, daylight hours are the safest. At night, cars won't see your cat and wild animals may attack her. A quick release collar is also a good idea so she can escape if she gets caught on something. If you use a quick release collar, remember that ID tags can get lost. Tattoo or microchip your cat at the vet's to keep her safe and traceable.

### Scratching

Cats love to scratch to leave their scent, to exercise and stretch their muscles and because it feels good! Trim your cat's nails and get them used to a scratching post to help keep them from scratching furniture. If you see your cat scratching the couch, gently pick her up and take her to her scratching post. You may even take her paws and gently make a scratching motion on the post. Add catnip to make the post more appetizing. Don't declaw your cat. This is a very serious surgery that takes away one of your cat's natural defenses. Be patient and train her instead.

### Litter Box Training

Cats need to be trained to use a litter box. This is fairly easy to do as cats are naturally clean animals. When you get your cat, keep her in one room with a place to sleep, eat, drink and use a litter box. This will make it easier for the cat to figure out where she is supposed to go. Keep her food dish and sleeping area as far away from the litter box as possible.

Cats usually need to use the litter box after they eat, wake up and play. Pick her up and gently put her in the litter box at these times and try to keep her there for a few seconds (don't force her) by petting her and reinforcing her. You can also try gently picking up her paws and scratching at the litter.

Be patient and never yell, hit or get angry with your cat, as this will only make training more difficult. If your cat uses an area other than the litter box, clean the area well to remove any smell. Leftover smell will encourage your cat to keep using an area.



## Health Care

Clean your cat's litter box every day. Cats love cleanliness. If long-haired, your cat will need to be brushed regularly to prevent her hair from tangling and matting. Her nails should be trimmed regularly.

Your cat will need to visit the vet once a year, where she can be checked for health and vaccinated against diseases. If your cat goes outside you should also provide flea prevention.

Spay or neuter your cat when he/she is 5-6 months old. Spayed/neutered cats are less likely to spray, will be healthier, calmer and quieter. There are many more cats than good homes in the world.



**Capital Regional District** | Animal Control  
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# Love Your Pets!

## Cat Care

Coss and Johanna