

CAT ADOPTION 2020 GUIDE



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CONGRATULATIONS! GETTING SETTLED

You may have been thinking about bringing home a new friend for a while. Your new feline, however, may be quite surprised by the sudden change in their life. Being in a new place can be scary, even for the most confident feline; there are lots of new sights, sounds, and smells to get used to. Follow these steps to set your feline up to feel safe and confident about their new home.

- 1. SET UP A SAFE PLACE.** Set up new your feline(s) in a small room, such as a bedroom or large bathroom, for the first **1-2 weeks**. Make sure your kitty has access to food, water, a litter box, toys, a soft place to sleep, and a place to hide. Felines settle in much more quickly if they can get used to a home a little at a time. If your feline is shy too much freedom, too fast can be overwhelming for them and cause unwanted behaviors.
- 2. START BONDING.** Give your feline lots of play sessions while in their safe space. If your feline is feisty, get into an early routine of at least two play sessions every day, morning and evening. If your feline is unsure of play or petting at first, start by sitting with them while they eat and offering extra yummy treats. For shy felines, calm, positive interactions are key to them gaining your trust.
- 3. ARE YOU READY TO EXPLORE?** Once your feline seems completely at home in their safe space (eating, grooming, using the litter box, and approaching you for attention), they are ready to slowly start exploring the rest of your home. **If your feline hasn't shown these behaviors allow them more time in their safe place to get comfortable.** As your feline begins to explore the house at first, supervise them to avoid any bad habits or injury. When they cannot be supervised, place them back in their safe area. If they haven't shown all these behaviors, give them more time to get comfortable.
- 4. INDOORS IS BEST.** While there may be times when your cat is safe outside, the healthiest place is inside with you. Without supervision, free-rein cats run the risk of injury from vehicles, dogs or other predators, and can contract parasites like fleas, ticks, ringworm and other diseases. Wandering cats can easily get lost or become a nuisance to your neighbors. An indoor cat will lead a happy, loving life as a family pet - and that's a purr-fect job.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

The fees for adopting animals allow us provide medical care, food, and shelter the animals in our care.



CORE TREATMENTS*

Dewormer
Flea Treatment
FVRCP
Rabies

**While in our care*



SPAY & NEUTER

Cats and kittens adopted through Española Humane must be altered prior to adoption.



MICROCHIP

Animals without microchips will receive one prior to adoption. All microchips are registered with 24PetWatch for the life of the pet at time of adoption.



MEDICAL EXAM

A copy of the animal's medical history will be provided to you at the time of adoption. Please consult your vet for any questions on the medical history.

HOME SWEET HOME

Successfully setting up your home will help encourage good behavior in your feline and help them feel more confident and relaxed. Before you open the door for exploration, take some time to consider what your home looks like through the eyes of your feline.

GOING UP! Felines think vertically in their space and it is very important they have options for perching or resting up off the ground. This can include cat trees, tables, desks, a sturdy box on the floor, or even a window sill with a kitty cot.

HIDEY HOLES. Cats and kittens like to have a safe place to watch the action. Offer places for your kitty to hide or get away when they are. **Do not pull your kitty out from their hidey hole to force an interaction as this may cause a setback as they build their trust in you.** You can use cat trees, covered beds, or even a cardboard box to provide your kitty with safe cover.

GOOD BATHROOM HABITS. To help your new cat maintain a lasting habit of using their box, follow these guidelines:

- Place the litter box in a quiet, easily accessible location
- Scoop the box daily, and replace all the litter every 1-2 weeks
- For multi-cat home, provide one litter box per cat in the home plus one
- Litter box accidents are often a result of stress, including stress from transition into a new home. Be patient, and monitor your kitty. If your new cat has more than one litter box accident and you have checked all the above recommendations, contact Española Humane for advice.

A FUN HOUSE. Give your new friend ways to exercise their body and brain and to provide outlets during the day, especially during a cat's active bursts in between naps. The more interactive and entertaining the house is for your feline, the less likely they will display unwanted behaviors.

- Scratching posts - they need to scratch and sharpen their claws
- Window perches to view the outdoors
- Tunnels, paper bags and boxes to explore
- Food games and small toys, like treat balls or treats hidden in boxes

USE POSITIVE ASSOCIATIONS. Your feline should not be expected to be comfortable right away in new places, or immediately bond to their new family. Here's how you can help them along and become best friends:

- Spend time daily with the kitten, but do not force any interactions
- When introducing your kitty to new things or people, use treats to sweeten the deal

SCRATCHING, THE 3 D'S

Scratching is a powerful, instinctive behavior, and virtually impossible to stop completely. Cats scratch to shed the outer layers of their claws, to mark their scent, to get attention, and to stretch and condition the muscles in their paws. If your cat is clawing away at your patience and leaving the edges of your furniture in tatters, following the 3 D's: Deter, Displace, and Dull.

1. **DETER** scratching with unpleasant tape and sprays. First, you need to make the areas you don't want your cat to scratch less inviting. The upholstered corners of couches and chairs are a scratching magnet, but you can apply an herbal spray deterrent like No-Scratch or a double-sided tape like Sticky Paws. Herbal sprays replace the territorial "markers" left behind after scratching with an unpleasant scent to discourage repeat scratching. Sticky Strips reduce scratching another way. Cat paws are extremely sensitive to touch, having evolved to detect the slightest vibrations of prey rushing through leaves and brush. This acute sensitive makes "sticky" surfaces exceptionally annoying, and cats will avoid scratching any place so uninviting.

2. **DISPLACE** where your cat scratches. If your feline doesn't have a special scratching spot to call her own, it's no wonder she claims the upholstery and wood of your furniture for her instinctive behavior. If you provide more appealing alternatives – like posts, furniture, or boards – you'll soon find your cat preferring to scratch elsewhere.

- If your problem area is around doorframes and the wooden legs of desks, consider a piece of cat furniture or post made of cedar.
- If your cat can't resist the soft sides of your couch or the nap of your best rug, choose a carpeted cat tree or perch.
- Sisal, the rough and tough marine-grade rope that scratches back, is yet another feline favorite for many clawers. Try a vertical post or tree.

No matter what tempting option you provide to replace your own furniture, a pinch or spray of catnip on the new scratching area will further encourage her to seek it out.

3. **DULL** your cat's claws to reduce damage. Trimming your cat's nails as part of her regular grooming routine is one of the most effective ways to blunt the damage scratching can cause. Use a veterinary-quality clipper, gently squeezing each paw to expose the retractable claws. For cats who resist handling, try wrapping her in a soft towel for safe restraint.

PLAYTIME

Every cat is a natural born hunter. Nowadays you're providing the food without the hunt; however, cats of any age still have plenty of desire to stalk, pounce, jump, and chase. Daily interactive play with your cat uses up natural energy and helps prevent unwanted behavior. Play can also help encourage a shy cat to come out of their shell.

1. Use interactive toys such as wand toys, strings, laser pointers, etc. Don't use your hands to play as this encourages your cat to use their mouths and paws on you, even when you may not be playing.
2. Move the toy to mimic the movement of prey creeping on the ground or flying through the air.
3. Challenge your cat and make them work for it. Some cats may need you to start slow but then you can build up the movements to keep it exciting.
4. After 10-15 minutes, start to slow down the movements of the toy and calm down the session.
5. Give them a final attack, let them catch their "prey", and reward their effort by offering treats or a meal.
6. If your cat is a feisty, after any period of activity or play, provide a nice cool-down time before you start petting. This gives their mind and body some time to relax and understand playtime is over.

CAT FACT. A cat's natural routine is hunt (play), eat, groom, sleep, and repeat. Try to offer play before meal times to encourage a hearty sleep.

WHAT YOUR CAT IS TRYING TO TELL YOU

Cats have different levels of tolerance for petting and handling. Some can be roughly handled by a toddler and stay as cool as a cucumber, while some show a higher sensitivity to their personal space. Luckily, cats are trying to tell you what they prefer when it comes to interactions.

WATCH THEIR BODY. Cats will give you signs that they're reaching their limit of petting. When you see one or more of these indicators, refrain from petting until these signs subside. These can include:

- Tail flicking and swishing
- Quick looks back at your hand when petting
- Walking away - note that some cats won't walk away so pay attention to other signs they are giving.

OOPS, I MISSED THE SIGN. When cats get too overwhelmed with petting, and their signs of needing a break are missed, their next course is to use their mouth and paws.

TAKE 5! Cats can also get overwhelmed by activity in the home just as much as handling, watch for the same signs above and offer either enrichment activities, playtime, or a break in a quiet place.

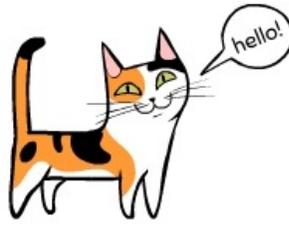
CAT FACT. While a cat rolling on their back may look like a belly rub invitation, most cats are highly sensitive to being pet there. It's best to wait until you've gotten to know your cat's boundaries.

SLOW AND STEADY. Every animal is an individual and, while some felines can handle dramatic changes in their lives, others may find new things more difficult to handle. After setting up your home and starting a routine with regular playtime, the best way to help your kitty is to be patient and allow your new feline friend time to adjust at their pace. If your cat is showing some undesirable behavior, it is likely due to stress from the transition. Patience and play will take you a long way.

CAT LANGUAGE



INTERESTED



FRIENDLY



ATTENTIVE



RELAXED



TRUSTING



FRIENDLY, RELAXED



CONTENT



CONFLICTED, CAUTIOUS



PLAYFUL



EXCITED



"THIS IS MINE"



ANXIOUS



PREDATORY



WORRIED



FRIGHTENED



THREATENED



TERRIFIED



SUPER TERRIFIED



IRRITATED



DISGUSTED

TREATMENTS AND VACCINES

A copy of your pet's medical records will be emailed to you at the time of adoption.

Just like people, when a cat experiences stress, their immune system can become compromised, and as stressed people can succumb to a cold, a stressed cat can also succumb to a similar upper respiratory infection (URI). While all efforts are made to keep our homeless pets comfortable and happy during their stay at Española Humane, a shelter is an inherently stressful place and cats can become ill with URI. The most common cause of URI is viral, and typically causes cold-like symptoms, such as sneezing and a runny nose or eyes. In most cases, URI will resolve without needing treatment. However, on some occasions, this mild viral URI can develop a secondary bacterial infection, usually manifesting with green or yellow nasal and/or eye discharge. These cases may require antibiotics to treat the infection, and an examination by a veterinarian is advised.

Going to a new home from the shelter is an exciting event for the entire family, but this can also cause some stress in your new pet causing some cats that appear healthy when they leave Española Humane, to succumb to URI once in their new home. Since the viruses that cause URI can be contagious to other cats, if your new cat is showing any signs of URI, please keep them separated from other cats in the household and seek medical advice from your family veterinarian.

Please note, vaccines or treatments due after the time of adoption will be at the cost of the adopter. We recommend making an appointment with a vet within two weeks of adoption to review your new pet's medical records and create a vaccine plan.

What are our core treatments?

FVRCP. Effective against feline rhinotracheitis virus, calicivirus, and panleukopenia. In a shelter environment it is started at 4 weeks of age and repeated every 2 weeks until 4 months old, then again in 1 year.

RABIES. Effective against rabies seen in cats or dogs. It is given at 3 months old, then boosted in 1 year.

FLEA TREATMENT. At the shelter we use Frontline for felines in our shelter. They are given one a month topically and are effective against fleas and ticks.

PYRANTEL. Effective against hookworm and roundworm. In the shelter it's given upon intake and repeated in two weeks.

PONAZURIL. Effective against coccidia. In the shelter it's given upon intake and then repeated in two weeks.

We do NOT routinely test cats for heartworm disease; confirming a diagnosis is a lot more complicated than it is in dogs. The best way to reduce the risk of heartworm infection in your cat is to give the preventative medication year-round.

ABOUT FELV AND FIV

Feline leukemia virus (FeLV) and feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV) are caused by distinct viruses and yet these diseases have similarities: both are contagious and incurable; both are more likely to be acquired by a cat that is allowed outside. Neither can infect humans or species other than cats.

FeLV is most common among cats that live together. It is mainly spread through saliva when cats groom each other, and when food and water bowls are shared. In North America, about 4% of tested cats are infected with FeLV. When first exposed, a cat might not show any signs of illness. Some cats can clear the virus completely from their body. In other cats, the infection will become active and they will develop problems such as low red blood cells (anemia) or cancer.

FIV is commonly found in male cats that are not neutered and in cats that fight with other cats. The virus is spread through the saliva and is usually passed to other cats by bite wounds. In North America, about 3 to 5% of tested cats are found to be infected with FIV. A newly infected cat may show mild illness, with a fever or a drop in appetite. These changes do not last more than a day or two before the cat is back to normal. These cats can still infect other cats. Later in life, the cat's infection may become active again, and the cat will show signs of sickness. As it can take many years for the virus to become active, cats infected with FIV frequently live long and healthy lives.

DIAGNOSIS. Española Humane is able to test your cat for these infections, upon request. There are certain factors that put cats at higher risk:

- Fighting, bite wound
- Time outdoors, even briefly
- Contact with other cats of unknown status
- Sickness, regardless of age

If your cat tests positive, make sure to confirm the result. No test is 100% accurate all the time, under all conditions.

HOW TO CARE FOR A POSITIVE CAT. A positive diagnosis is not an automatic death sentence. While it can be scary to hear that your cat has an incurable disease, these illnesses can be effectively managed and many infected cats live long and healthy lives.

INTRODUCING YOUR NEW CAT

Cats by nature are solitary creatures. They often exist in the wild in small family groups of two or three but each member also needs to have plenty of alone time. Top all of this off with a very territorial nature and you have a recipe for disaster when introducing an additional cat into your home. Cats can learn to enjoy another cat not of their immediate family group. In some cases, they may learn to merely tolerate another cat in their domain, *but it must be done carefully*.

BASIC GUIDELINES. Follow each step carefully and do not skip any step. With older animals, plan on spending twice as much time on each step. It is not uncommon for some older cats that have never shared a household to take up to 12 weeks before you finally get to Step Six. Younger animals, such as kittens, will often complete the following steps within 10 to 12 days.

- Do not go on to the next step unless BOTH cats are acting normal; meaning there is no hissing, growling, spitting and all involved are calm. To rush a step may result in aggression, unnecessary vet bills and a lifetime of an adversarial relationship between the cats!
- **Pay lots of attention to your existing cat** throughout the following procedure, including daily exercise (try a cat aerobics or cat dancer toy). This will help your old cat feel more secure that someone else isn't going to take away your affection.
- **Coincide feeding times for both cats.** This will greatly help a successful introduction. Lots of little feedings, many times a day do more good than only one or two larger ones.
- **Do not at any time physically hold the cats and put them face-to-face.** That is a surefire way to stimulate aggression! Cats are not very forgiving either. If they start out on the wrong foot, it is very difficult to undo the damage.
- **Always provide an additional litter box in a different location.** If you have more than two cats, provide at least one box per cat. This is to prevent territorial disputes over this important resource. Remember to clean the boxes daily to encourage correct litter box habits.

STEP ONE: Confine the new cat to its own small room.

This is to be your new cat's "playpen" and safety area. A bathroom, small office or small bedroom where your existing cat normally does not "hang out" are ideal locations.

Put a litter box, bed, food, water, scratching post and toys in the new cat's room. This special room accomplishes several things. One, it decreases the chances of spreading any disease your new cat may be carrying. (Remember to keep your new cat confined for 10 days even if you are able to complete the steps in a shorter time.) Two, it helps your new cat get used to the smells, sounds and you, without having to confront a "hostile" greeting party (your existing cat).

Provide your existing cat with his own litter box, bed, toys, etc. in a different area of the house. He may go to the room of your new cat, sniff under the door, hiss, and yell, but just ignore him

when he does so. Do not punish him in any way for hissing or growling at this point. Just walk away from him. Give him attention when he is calm.

STEP TWO: Use "scented" feeding dishes.

After your new cat has been confined for several days and is not hiding from you or acting nervous, take a **small wash cloth, rub it on your new cat and then place it under your "old" cat's food dish just before feeding time.** Now do the opposite for the new cat. If either cat is reluctant to eat, try adding something special to the cat's bowl to entice him to eat. (Or put the wash cloth at a distance from his bowl where he will eat quietly. Gradually over the next few days, bring the wash cloth closer until you can finally put it under his dish without any problems).

Repeat at each feeding (always reviving the scent by rubbing on the opposite cat) until each cat eats calmly with no hesitation, hissing or growling. The more feedings you have per day, the faster the process will go. Just feed smaller amounts spread out over the day.

The successful completion of this step may take up to two weeks in some cats or as little as four days with others. In any case, do not move on until each cat is relaxed.

STEP THREE: Use close feedings.

After the successful completion of step three, place each cat's dish on respective sides of the new-comer's room. Again, feed definite meals to each cat, at the same time, on each side of their door. You do not need to add the scented cloth under the dish any longer. Repeat this process until BOTH cats are acting normal and then go on to Step Four.

You can also help this process along by playing daily with each cat under the door with a cat aerobics toy (a rubber pom-pom looking spider on a wire). In the process of playing they will put their paws under the door for the other to see and smell. This may help to engage them in play under the door with each other as well.

STEP FOUR: Play the Switch Game.

If you are starting this step, check to make sure you have had your new cat at least 10 days. If it has not been at least 10 days, stay on Step Three. This is to prevent the spreading of disease. If it is over 10 days and you are still not at this step, do not worry! Go at your cat's pace.

Confine your old cat to a comfortable room with a litter box and some of his favorite food. Let the new cat out to explore by just opening the door to his room. Do not carry him out; as we want him to learn the route to and from his room on his own four feet. Let him wander around for several hours under supervision. Play with him and encourage him to relax.

Next, put him away in his room and let your "old" cat out. Your existing cat may walk around the house, sniffing, hissing, or growling, as he can now certainly smell that "intruder" in all parts of HIS house. That is OK. Let him walk around and act grumpy. Just ignore him or try to get him to play with you to help relax him.

Repeat the switch game daily until BOTH cats are acting normal and are relaxed.

STEP FIVE: Limited Contact.

Start this step by putting our new cat back into his safe room. This process will allow the cats to see each other but not make physical contact.

Either: Stack two 36" high-tension baby gates in the newcomer's doorway, but with about two inches left at the very bottom. (Enough to get a paw under but not a head.)

OR: Use two hard plastic doorstops, jam the door of the room with the stops one on each side with the door cracked open only two to three inches. Make sure that neither cat can fit his head through the opening. Check that the door is secured and will not suddenly pop open or slam shut if a cat body slams against the door.

Continue the feeding ritual from Step Four above but with each cat still on their respective side of the baby gates or jammed door. When you are not home or cannot supervise, close the door. Hissing, growling, posturing should have ended before you continue on to Step Six.

STEP SIX: Let them meet casually.

After the completion of ALL the steps above, let the cats casually find each other in the household. Start first by heavily exercising EACH cat separately, especially if one animal is young and playful. If one animal wants to play badly with the other cat, they can quickly become enemies.

Next, get each cat's food dish ready with something really good, like bits of tuna or a tablespoon of wet food. Just before feeding time, leave the new cat's door open or take down the stacked baby gates. Let the cats casually find each other and then feed them a meal, so they are eating about one foot away for each other.

Next, go ahead and get out a cat toy and play with the cats together. The whole process of Step Six is designed to associate something really pleasant with having this other cat around. Some cats may hide; there may be some initial hissing or growling. That is OK. Let them work it out as long as no one is launching a full-out physical attack on the other.

DO NOT SUPPORT A BULLY. If one cat always seems to be the aggressor, supervise any interaction. Be ready with a squirt bottle set on a straight stream to break up any catfights. Just make sure it is harassment and not play! Do not leave the cats together unsupervised if you are having this problem. Put the bully into confinement when you cannot watch them.

EXERCISE THE AGGRESSOR before they are allowed to interact. This often takes off the "edge". The disagreeable one can also wear a harness dragging a six-foot leash under supervision. The harness is so you can quickly remove him from the situation. Again, try to associate something positive with having the other cat around, like special treats or play.

If you have to start over, the introduction may take up to three times as long as you are having to repair that "bad first impression". Introducing a new animal takes a lot of time and patience. Do not try to rush things as you may end up with archenemies instead of best friends!

INTRODUCING CATS TO DOGS

Dogs and cats can learn to get along with one another in the same household. They may never relish each other's company, but they can learn to tolerate each other. It is easier to introduce a puppy to a kitten since they are both young and have not had bad experiences with the other species. But even older dogs and cats can learn to live with each other with a few simple rules.

NEVER ALLOW YOUR PUPPY OR DOG TO APPROACH YOUR CAT. You may think that your dog just wants to be friends, but your cat will allow just so much sniffing before she decides to tell your dog to "back off!" Dogs like to chase small creatures. That is part of their hunting instincts, so it is not that your dog is being bad, he is following his instincts. Keep your dog in a down/stay whenever your cat is in the room. That way the dog is under control while the cat can gain some confidence around him.

If you do not have verbal control over your dog, meaning you can't stop him in his tracks when you tell him "NO" or "OFF", then keep him on a leash in the house until you can learn to verbally control him. Just let your dog drag a six-to-10-foot leash around the house behind him so you can stop him easily. Praise your dog as soon as he stops chasing your cat.

If you cannot get a handle on the dog's behavior, a good quality training class can put you back in control of the dog so the cat can enjoy her home too!

Do not allow your dog to chase ANY small animals. That will only undermine training your dog to leave your cat alone.

ALLOW YOUR CAT TO APPROACH YOUR DOG. By all means, allow your cat to walk up and investigate your dog but watch carefully so the dog does not attempt to chase your cat. By allowing this to happen, your cat will gain trust in you and your dog that nothing bad is going to happen to her. Your cat will begin to realize that sharing a house with a dog (who is not allowed to approach her) isn't so bad at all!

ALLOW YOUR CAT TO HIDE. Do not force a meeting between the two. Allow your cat to investigate the dog on her own time; just make sure the dog is not allowed to chase her at ANY time. Give her a quiet room to escape to with her food, out of reach of the dog as well. It may take as long as eight to 10 weeks before your cat will adjust to sharing her home with a canine pal.

KEEP THE DOG AND CAT SEPARATED WHEN YOU ARE NOT HOME. Until you feel that your dog is not going to terrorize your cat at any time, do not leave them alone. Either put your cat in a room with the door closed (make sure your cat has her litter box in there as well as some toys and water) or put your dog into confinement (such as a crate placed in your house).

REWARD ANY POSITIVE INTERACTION BETWEEN THE TWO. Every time the dog lets the cat approach him or lets the cat walk by him without chasing her, PRAISE, PRAISE, PRAISE such as saying in a happy voice, "GOOODDD DOGGG! WHAT A GOOOD BOY YOU ARE!"

GIVE YOUR DOG AN OUTLET FOR HIS CHASE BEHAVIOR. Teach your dog to chase a ball, Frisbee, tether ball or squeaky toy, rather than your cat. Regular exercise can also help your dog remain calm around your cat.

CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR ADOPTION!

*Once you've settled in, please send photos!
(email contact@espanolahumane.org).*



CONTACT US

-  Location
108 Hamm Parkway
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-  Clinic: 505-753-0228
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-  Clinic Hours: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday By Appointment Only
-  Shelter Hours: By Appointment Only

TAX INFO

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