



All About CATS

All The Info You Need Before Buying Your New Cat

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All About CATS

Buying a Cat – Are You Ready?

So, you've decided that you want to have a pet cat. However, before you shop for your kitten, you may need to consider a few important things. After all, finding out that a cat is not for you after you've already grown attached can be heart breaking.

The main reason that people have to find their cats new homes is that they are allergic to cats. If you've never spent much time around cats, be sure you can spend a few hours in a home with cats without developing an allergy attack. Also, check with friends and family to be sure none of them are highly allergic.

Next, you may want to consider your lifestyle. Although most cats need less interaction than dogs, your cat can still become lonely and bored if left alone all day. A bored cat is often a bad cat. If you work long hours, consider getting two kittens so that they can keep each other company.

Don't forget to take a look at your home and be sure you can fit in a cat and all of his accessories. Cats need litter boxes, food dishes, toys, and a scratching post. If you have children, the litter box will need to be placed in a place that your children can't get to, but that your cat can access easily.

Once you decide that a cat will fit into your household, you will need to decide whether you want a kitten or an older cat. Most people take one look at that cute, fluffy kitten and fall in love. Since kittens have not developed bad habits, a kitten is the perfect choice for people who have time to litter box train their new pet. Most kittens have not yet been altered or declawed and must receive a series of immunizations to protect them from infectious cat diseases. Older cats are a good choice for people who want a slightly less energetic pet and do not have time to train their cats to use the litter box. Most older pet cats have already been altered and will only need to take booster vaccinations.

Now that you know whether you want a cat or a kitten, you will need to find out where to buy your new cat. If you just want a great pet and aren't concerned with owning a specific breed, the best place to look is your local humane society or animal rescue. These organizations are usually overrun with healthy, sweet cats and kittens. If you are looking for a specific cat breed instead, a cat show can be a wonderful resource. Many exhibitors bring along a few kittens that are for sale. Even if you can't find kittens of the breed you are looking for at the show, you can ask exhibitors to place you on a waiting list for one of their kittens.

Once you bring your new pet home, don't be surprised if your cat takes several days to settle in. To help your cat adjust quickly, be sure you have a bed, litter box, and food dishes set up in a permanent spot.

How to Choose the Right Cat Breed

There are so many cat breeds. How can you decide which breed is right for you and your family? Follow this handy guide to select the perfect cat breed.

The first thing you should consider is whether you will be able to handle having a vocal cat. Some cat breeds can actually be quite noisy. While many cat owners do not have a problem with these vocal breeds, as they realize their cats are just communicating with them, a loud cat can be a problem in an apartment situation. Breeds that are very vocal are the Siamese Cat, the Korat, and the Burmese. The Scottish Fold, Somali, and the American Curl are considered to be very quiet cat breeds.

Next, you will want to think about whether you want a cat who is cuddly or if a more aloof breed is right for you. If you do not have a lot of free time, a cuddly cat who loves attention may be the wrong choice. However, affectionate cats are usually better with children than more reserved breeds. Some of the friendliest cat breeds are the Snowshoe, Abyssinian, Maine Coon, Ragdoll, Tonkinese, and the Himalayan Persian. Less sociable breeds are the Norwegian Forest Cat, the Nebelung, and the Russian Shorthair.

If you are looking for a cat who can amuse himself and will not get into constant mischief, then the Sphynx, Siamese, Rex, Balinese, and British Angora breeds may be a bad choice. These cats are very inquisitive and energetic. However, for someone who is homebound or has a lot of free time, these cats are a wonderful source of entertainment. In fact, the Rex is downright silly in his attempts to amuse those around him.

Of course, while you are looking at what cat breed to shop for, don't get so caught up in selecting the right temperament that you overlook other important features. One of the most important things to consider when you are looking for the right cat is whether you want a long haired or short haired breed.

People who don't have a lot of time to devote to a pet may want to opt for a short haired breed. Although that fuzzy ball of fluff may look adorable right now, grooming adult long haired cats can take up quite a lot of time. If you neglect your cat's coat, it can tangle and matt up at an alarmingly fast rate, right down to his skin. Once this happens, your only option is to have him shaved completely, which can be quite traumatic. Also, your cat will probably have to be sedated before he can be shaved down, which poses a health risk.

Once you consider all of the different features and traits for the cat breeds you are interested in, you will finally be ready to start searching for your new pet. Now, you will need to decide whether you want a kitten or if you would prefer to give an abandoned older cat a second chance. If you are looking for a certain breed of kitten, check out your local cat show, since most exhibitors have a few kittens for sale. If an older cat is right for you, give your local humane society or animal rescue a call.

About the Cat Fancier's Association

Are you interested in finding a purebred cat? As you shop for your cat, you may notice the initials CFA in some advertisements. What exactly does this mean? CFA stands for the Cat Fancier's Association, the largest purebred cat registry in the world. The CFA was created to maintain breed standards and register litters of purebred kittens. In addition, this association holds cat shows, where cats are judged to see how closely they adhere to their breed's standard. The CFA recognizes only forty one breeds of cats.

When a breeder registers a litter of kittens with the Cat Fancier's Association, he or she has the option of deciding that the kitten cannot be bred. Only cats with a pin number on their registration forms will be eligible to have their kittens registered. This allows the breeders to continue to better their breeds. Once the litter is registered, each kitten will need to be individually registered by its new owner.

The CFA has placed the cat breeds it recognizes into three categories. These groups are the Championship Class, the Provisional Class, and the Miscellaneous Class. Each of the forty one breeds that the CFA recognizes is placed in one of these groups. When cats are shown, they must win first place in their breed and then their class before they can compete for the title of best in show.

Cats in the Championship Class are those who are solidly established cat breeds. The breeds in the Provisional Class have been more recently established and are still being closely watched to be sure they conform to the new breed standard. Finally, the one breed currently in the Miscellaneous Class is still having a breed standard created and cannot actually compete for the best in show title.

If you live in Canada, you have a second option. You can register your cat in the Canadian Cat Association. This association was formed by Canadians who did not want to register their cats with an association in another country. Other popular cat registries are the Traditional Cat Association, which supports original breed standards and does not uphold current trends that exaggerate breed characteristics, the Governing Council of the Cat Fancy, which is the United Kingdom's cat registry, and the Fédération Internationale Féline, which is the European cat registry.

Although there are many breeds of cats, they all fit into one of two categories, short hair or long hair. Short hair cats include breeds such as the Abyssinian and the British Shorthair, while Norwegian Forest Cats and Turkish Angoras are representatives of long hair cats. Of the forty one CFA recognized cat breeds, the most popular is probably the American Shorthair, which has been in the United States for over 300 years. Although non-pedigreed pet cats often resemble this breed, it has actually been carefully and selectively bred for generation after generation to develop characteristics that would appear in every kitten. Other popular breeds are the Siamese, the Rex, the Main Coon, the Persian and the Ragdoll.

Just remember, a pedigree doesn't make your kitten any more loving and affectionate. There are many wonderful pet cats without a pedigree. However, a pedigree does enable you to pick out a kitten that will have certain characteristics.

Multiple Cat Households

For many people, a single cat is the ideal situation. However, for others, cats seem to be like potato chips. They can't stop with just one. This is partly because there are so many wonderful cat breeds and partly because most cats enjoy the companionship of other cats.

Is owning more than one cat right for the cat you already own? If your cat is home alone for long periods of time and seems to be lonely, he may enjoy having another cat around. In addition, an older cat will often develop a new lease on life when a new kitten joins the family. However, cats who enjoy their solitude or are very territorial towards their homes and families may not appreciate sharing their lives with another cat.

There are also a few things for the humans in the household to consider. A new kitten means having to go through all of the frustrations of litter box training all over again. In addition, don't forget about the expense of vaccinating and neutering your kitten. Adding an older cat to the family can also be a challenge, as the cat will have to adjust to a new home and may develop behavioral or health problems.

Although some people feel that their cats will be more at home with a cat from the same breed, many cats are quite happy to hang out with other cat breeds. Of course, you may want to reconsider pairing a boisterous, clownish Rex cat with a standoffish Russian Blue. Cat breeds with similar traits do better together than cats that are completely different. Of course, the Himalayan Persian and the Maine Coon breeds are so laid back and friendly that they adapt well to life with the most demanding or rambunctious cats.

Before you bring your new cat home, you will need to set up an area for him to stay in while he adjusts. You may even want to put him in a crate, especially if you are unsure whether he is litter box trained. Allow him to settle in for a day or so before you worry about introducing him to the rest of the family.

Instead of placing the cats together immediately, allow your original cat to grow accustomed to the new arrival gradually. For a smooth transition, be sure he does not have to share his own litter box, food and water bowls, or toys with the newcomer. Besides the fact that your cat may not like to share, there are important health reasons for giving each cat his own supplies. You can reduce the chance of your cats spreading diseases to each other and you can more easily monitor the appetite of each cat if they have separate litter boxes and food bowls. Also, cats who are forced to share litter boxes may decide to create their own private litter boxes in other, less convenient places, such as the closet floor.

Of course, there is one major problem with having multiple cats. Once you have two or more cats, everyone with a stray or unwanted cat will assume they can convince you to add just one more to the family.

Cat Growth Stages – How a Cat Matures

When a kitten is born, it is hard to believe that one of these helpless little pink things will become a graceful and powerful hunter. However, within a year, that tiny kitten will be a mature cat.

Since kittens are born blind and are completely dependent on their mothers, it is no surprise that their first stage involves little more than eating and growing. However, once your kitten's eyes open, he will begin to explore the world around him. By the time he is four weeks old, he will be romping shakily about with his siblings. He can begin to learn to use the litter box and should start to become socialized. In the wild, a kitten's mother will start to supplement his diet with dead mice or other small prey. You may prefer to give him some soft kitten food or some dry food softened in water.

By the time your kitten is six to eight weeks old, he is ready to begin exploring a bit further from home. If he is indoors, he will venture into other rooms, while a feral kitten will begin to follow his mother when she goes to hang out with the rest of the local cat colony. While the kitten's mother may still bring him mice, they are no longer already dead. The kitten begins to develop his hunting abilities. Eight week old kittens are usually completely weaned and ready to go to a new home.

Over the next several months, kittens will continue to grow fairly quickly. They need to receive a series of vaccinations so that they stay strong and healthy. They will begin to learn how to coexist with their families and will learn which behaviors are allowed. Your kitten should learn his name and a few simple commands. Also, if you have a long haired cat, it is important to get him used to the grooming process now, even if he doesn't actually have a coat that needs to be brushed yet.

Has your sweet little kitten suddenly developed a bad attitude? Cats go through an adolescent stage to transition from being a kitten to being a mature cat, just as human children do. This stage usually begins at around five to six months and may last until your cat reaches his first year. He will still be very playful, but may occasionally get carried away and play too aggressively. If you do not neuter your cat at six months of age, he will actually be mature enough to reproduce. Neutering your cat will help him get through this stage much more smoothly. At six months of age, your cat will look pretty much like he will look as an adult. However, he will fill out and bulk up as he continues to mature.

Of course, once he is an adult, your cat will go through additional stages, such as middle age, just as humans do. The good news is that you won't have to worry that little Fluffy will run out and buy a sports car if he has a bit of a mid-life crisis.

Feeding Your Cat – Make Sure He Gets the Nutrition He Needs

So, you have a new kitten. You can just dump some cat food in a bowl and get on with your life, right? Well, there's a bit more to the process than this. To keep your kitten healthy, you will need to be sure that you meet all of his nutritional needs.

For the first few weeks of his life, your kitten received all of his nutrition from his mother. As he reached four to six weeks of age, the breeder probably began supplementing the mother cat's milk with canned kitten food or with hard kitten chow moistened with water. By the time your kitten reached eight weeks of age, he was weaned and eating a diet of kitten food. Your breeder should have given you some of the food your kitten was eating or at least the name of the kitten chow.

If you want to change the kitten chow brand that your kitten is eating, you should still buy a small bag of the brand he is currently eating so that you can mix it with the new food. This way your kitten will be able to gradually adjust to the new food without upsetting his digestion.

Young kittens need to eat quite a bit of food. After all, they are growing incredibly fast from the age of eight weeks to about six months. This means that your cat will need to eat more than once a day. In fact, kittens under six months of age do best with four small meals a day, since they do not have very large stomachs, but need plenty of fuel. You should give your kitten an unlimited water supply.

Once your kitten reaches six months of age, his rate of growth slows down dramatically. He will become a bit less active, as well. You can cut his feedings back to two to three meals a day. However, you should not change his food from kitten chow to adult food, yet. He is still a growing cat.

Once your cat is a year old, he can finally eat adult cat food. Since adult cats usually eat when they are hungry, you can simply keep his dish filled with dry food. However, if he overeats and begins to grow overweight, you will need to feed him twice a day instead. If you feed your cat canned food, you should still offer dry food as well, since canned food should not be left out for your cat to eat all day.

When you shop for cat food, look for foods that have the protein source in the first few ingredients. You should also make sure the food is balanced. If your cat has health problems, such as hair balls or urinary tract infections, you should look for cat foods that help control these problems.

Although most cats prefer soft food, dry food can help them maintain better dental health. If your cat refuses to eat dry food, you may want to have your dentist to check his teeth every year or so to be sure they are not too covered in tartar.

Cat Feeders and Bowls

While cats do have a reputation as finicky eaters, few cats really insist on dining from fine crystal bowls. However, that doesn't mean you should feed your cat straight from the can, either. Cats should have their own sturdy feeders or bowls that are easy to clean.

If you spend quite a few hours away from home or have several cats, you may want to take a look at cat feeders that can hold enough food to feed a cat for several days. This way, you can be sure your cats are cared for even if you are a bit busy.

The first type of cat feeder refills from a reservoir as your cat empties the bowl. It can be used to feed one cat for several days or you can feed multiple cats from the feeder. However, these feeders do have some disadvantages. Aggressive cats can easily prevent the more timid members of the family from getting enough food. Also, it is harder for you to monitor how much each cat is eating, so you may not realize that one of your cats is not eating as much as he usually does. Since this is an important sign of illness, this can be a serious problem. Finally, cats who are finicky may waste a lot of food by refusing to eat it if it has been sitting in the feeder for more than a few hours.

The second type of cat feeder available is the automatic cat feeder. This feeder has several compartments. The feeder's lid has an opening that allows the cat to eat out of one compartment at a time. A battery operated motor rotates the lid using a timer so that a different compartment is revealed at timed intervals.

If you have cats who are very territorial, your cats may do better with their own individual dishes. This way, you can easily feed your cats in separate areas of the house. When you are shopping for cat food bowls, look for bowls that are dishwasher safe and unbreakable.

If you have a single cat, you may want to take a look at a combination feeder that holds two bowls, one for food and one for water. These feeders allow you to keep the feeding area tidy, but are easy to clean, since you can take the bowls out of the feeder to wash and disinfect them.

For the fussiest cats, you can shop for heated food bowls. These bowls are also a great way to provide local strays with water during the winter months.

To keep your cats healthy, you should clean the food bowls daily. If the bowls are dishwasher safe, cleaning is as simple as throwing out old food and dropping the dishes in the dishwasher. Never leave food sitting in the bowls for long periods of time, as dry food can grow stale and soft food can spoil. In addition, be sure that you clean your cat's water bowl each day and re-fill it with fresh, clean water.

Choosing a Bed for Your Cat - The Perfect Place to Cat Nap

Are you tired of cat hair on the counters, footprints on the windowsills, and rumpled pillows? If so, you may want to consider giving your cat his own resting spot. In fact, to truly make your cat happy, you may need to provide him with several cat beds in different areas.

There are so many different types and styles of cat beds that finding one that blends with your décor should not be too hard. You can look for colorful cat beds in fun pet prints that add a touch of whimsy to the room or you can shop for cat beds with plenty of designer elegance, instead. Of course, your cat will be more concerned with how the bed feels than what it looks like.

Cat beds often have fleece pillows to keep them feeling cozy. These beds may be oval shaped with high sides or they may actually be completely enclosed to form a cozy nest bed. Cats enjoy being able to snuggle up in a secure spot, which is why so many of them manage to squeeze inside sofas or other odd spots to nap.

Some nest beds are even heated to add more warmth. If you have a cat that spends time on the porch or in other chilly areas, you may want to consider providing him with one of these beds.

If your cat sheds hair on the furniture, a nap mat is a useful option. Place the nap mat where your cat usually sleeps and simply store it away when company comes. The cushions beneath the mat will be cat hair free.

A cat perch, which is a padded shelf, is another popular piece of napping equipment. Attach the cat perch to your windowsill so your cat can look out the window and dream of stalking the wild birds he sees as he naps.

When you buy a cat bed, don't be surprised if your cat ignores it completely for a while. If he refuses to explore the bed, you may want to add a catnip toy to the bed to attract his attention. Placing the bed in a cat friendly location will also make it more appealing to your cat. Cats do not care to nap in low places. Instead, position the cat bed on an end table or platform that is a few inches off the floor. Also, be sure the bed is not in an area that receives heavy traffic. If your cat feels as though he can never let down his guard and relax, he won't want to nap in his bed.

Of course, if you have several cats, you may need a napping spot for each cat. If you don't want three or four cat beds in your home, you may want to shop for the kitty version of a play gym, the cat condo. The cat condo allows several cats to nap in elevated spots. To get the most value for your money, look for a cat condo that has climbing areas and a place to sharpen claws in addition to napping spots.

Cat Litter Boxes

For most cat owners, one of the biggest drawbacks of owning a cat is the dreaded cat litter box. Few people like to clean litter boxes. After all, they aren't just smelly. Litter can be quite dusty and people that change litter boxes are more susceptible to some cat diseases that can be caught by humans than people that do not change their cats' litter boxes.

Luckily, there are several new litter box designs that make the task of changing cat litter much easier. One popular design is the hooded litter box. These boxes provide privacy for more sensitive cats, but they also help keep down litter dust. The hooded box is ideal for a single cat, as long as the cat's owners can change the box frequently to keep it smelling clean and fresh. For people who don't want to handle the soiled litter, there are removable liners for these boxes. Simply lift out the whole liner filled with soiled litter and discard it. Lay down a new liner, add fresh cat litter, and replace the lid.

Another popular cat litter box design is the self cleaning litter box. This box is ideal for families with multiple cats, as cats do not like to use dirty litter boxes. The rake removes soiled litter into a removable receptacle and leaves the box fresh and clean. The cat owner can easily discard the dirty litter without having to do anything more than pulling out the receptacle containing the dirty litter and throwing it away.

It is fairly easy to teach your kitten to use a litter box. The most important things for you to do are to position the litter box in the right place and to keep it extremely clean. Litter boxes should never be placed next to your cat's sleeping or eating spots, as cats do their best to keep these areas clean.

Once you put the litter box in a convenient place, it is time to teach your cat what the box is for. Begin by placing your cat in the box and raking your fingers through the clean litter. Your cat may just decide to start using the box right away. If so, praise him lavishly. If he simply hops out, play with him a few minutes and then place him back in the box. Repeat this procedure several times, but do not overdo it. You don't want to frustrate your cat.

When your cat eats, wait approximately ten or fifteen minutes and then place your cat in the litter box. If he uses the box, praise him. Also, when your cat is napping, keep an eye on him so that you can take him to the litter box when he awakens.

If your cat does not use the litter box, do not scold him for his accidents. He will just become angry and frustrated. Instead, place the box in the spot where he most frequently has accidents and encourage him to use it.

Once your cat uses his litter box a few times, he should continue to use it. If he stops using the box, be sure it is clean. If the litter box is not dirty, he may have a health problem, so be sure to consult your veterinarian.

Why Cats Scratch

Are your chairs, window screens, and rugs all turning to confetti beneath your cat's lethal claws? If so, you may be wondering how you can stop this behavior. Of course, it may be easier to stop your cat from destroying your home if you understand why he scratches first.

Before cats were domesticated, they were deadly hunters. They relied on their razor sharp claws to help them climb trees so that they could leap down on their prey. Today, cats may get dinner from a bowl, but they still sharpen their claws. Scratching is their way of trimming their nails, since it removes the old outer part of the claws. Another reason cats scratch is to let other cats know that the house and yard belong to them. When cats scratch, they release scent from special glands in their paws that help them mark that spot as theirs. Finally, cats scratch to get the kinks out of their bodies and to burn off some of their energy.

If you are getting fed up with your cat's scratching, you may be planning to declaw him. However, before you have this surgery performed, you may want to try some alternatives.

One simple way to prevent cats from scratching is to provide them with scratching pads or posts. You can shop for a wide variety of scratching posts, including posts that are part of an elaborate condo. However, you can also make your own simple scratching post, using a two foot high section of a four by four, a two foot by two foot piece of heavy plywood, and a carpet remnant. Once you have a scratching post or pad, be sure you place it right next to his favorite piece of furniture. After he is in the habit of scratching the post, you can try moving it a bit further from the furniture, but you should do so gradually.

If having his own personal scratching post doesn't deter your cat from ruining the furnishings, try using a pet repellant spray, such as Bitter Apple, on the furniture. (You may want to test the spray on an obscure part of the upholstery first to be sure it doesn't discolor the fabric.) If you don't want to risk spraying your furniture, try covering the material with aluminum foil or tape that is placed sticky side up. Your cat will not care for the feel of these materials and should willingly turn to his scratching post instead.

For cats that still insist on scratching, declawing may be the only option. As long as your cat does not leave the house, this should be safe. However, declawing is painful and there is some risk to the procedure, since your cat will be under anesthesia during the surgery. Some people recommend using nail caps instead, but these caps do have a tendency to fall off and will need to be replaced occasionally. The caps are applied in a similar manner to the way manicurists attach false nails. The nails are shortened and then the caps are applied with a non toxic adhesive.

How To Train a Cat

Many people are under the mistaken impression that cats are arrogant, moody creatures that will ignore their owners' attempts to train them. They think that cats could obey and choose not to. Although cats do ignore commands because they don't feel like doing what their owners ask, sometimes they are not obeying because they simply do not understand.

Training a cat generally takes a lot more time and patience than training a dog. Positive reinforcement works better than negative reinforcement with cats. If you punish them, they will just wait until you are not watching to misbehave, so it is better to simply ignore wrong responses and lavish praise on your cat when he responds correctly.

You should start training your cat when he is about eight to ten weeks old. However, if you have an older cat, don't let that stop you. It may be a bit harder to teach him, but old cats can learn new tricks.

It is best to begin training your cat by teaching him to come when he is called, just as you do with a puppy. Make sure you have a supply of your cat's favorite treat and that he is feeling well rested and fairly happy. If there is a lot of noise and confusion, move to a quieter area, so your cat is not distracted. Before you begin training, decide on one command and be sure you use it consistently. Commands should be short and easy to say. 'Come kitty' or 'Here kitty' are both good choices.

Once you decide on a command, you are ready to start training your kitten. Get down on her level by sitting or kneeling on the floor and call him to you using the command. Sound excited and happy. When your kitten comes to you, give him a treat and praise him lavishly. Then, either wait for the kitten to move away or stand up and move to another part of the room. Repeat the come command. Do not train your kitten for longer than ten minutes at a time. If he seems to be growing bored or frustrated, stop training. You should ideally hold two or three training sessions a day for a week. Once you are sure your kitten has truly grasped the meaning of the come command, you can start to teach him other commands, such as no or stay.

Finally, there are several other things you should teach your cat for his own well being. He should learn to tolerate a harness and leash in case you need to travel long distances with him or take him to the veterinarian. For the same reason, he should learn to use a crate.

To teach your kitten to use a harness and leash, start by putting the harness on him. Once the harness is in place, do not restrain him in any way. Praise him lavishly and be sure to give him his favorite treat. Once he is accustomed to the harness, attach the leash and let him lead you around a bit. Then, coax him into following you by offering more treats and praise. Although few cats actually learn to heel on the leash, your cat should learn not to panic and struggle when he is wearing his leash.

Teaching your kitten to use a crate is a bit easier. Put a cozy blanket and a favorite toy in the crate. Praise him lavishly as you place him in the crate. Leave him inside for two or three minutes and then release him. Do not make a big deal about letting him out of the crate, but

always reward him for going in. Gradually extend the time you leave your kitten in the crate each time, until he is comfortable staying in his crate for an hour or two.

Cat Collars and Leashes

While almost everyone walks their dog, few people walk their cats. However, cats can learn to walk on a leash. In fact, there are collars, harnesses, and leashes designed just for cats.

Unlike dog collars, cat collars are not created so that they can be used with a cat leash. The shape of a cat's head makes it too easy for a collar attached to a leash to pop right off. Instead, collars are used for other reasons. Many people use collars as accessories. They place jeweled collars on their cats simply because they like the way these collars look. Other people use cat collars to hold id tags, so that they can more easily find their cats if they escape. Of course, the most common reason for putting a collar on a cat is to warn birds of his approach. Collars with bells on them may be a low tech alarm system, but they work.

Cat harnesses are designed to stay securely on a cat, even when the cat is on a leash. You can buy a simple nylon harness for your cat or you can find more deluxe models that look more like padded vests. As long as the harness is completely adjustable, it should work well.

Cat leashes can be standard leashes or retractable models. Whichever type of leash you choose, be sure that it is lightweight enough to allow your cat to move easily under its weight. Retractable leashes are ideal for people who want to allow their cats to explore their surroundings in a park or other traffic safe area, but want to keep the cats close by when they are walking to and from their homes.

To accustom your cat to walking on a leash, you should not use the same techniques you use to train your dog. Cats do not do well with negative correction, so giving a quick tug on the leash when they do not stay at your side will not teach them to heel. Instead, praise your cat when he does what you want and ignore him when he does the wrong thing. Although you can teach your cat to tolerate a leash, don't expect him to consistently heel on command.

The easiest way to teach your cat to use a leash is to start when he is a young kitten of eight to ten weeks old. Place his harness on him and allow him to walk about completely unrestrained. After a few days, add the leash. Be sure that you do not apply any pressure. Once your cat is used to the leash, you can pick it up and teach him that it is ok for you to be on the other end of the leash. Gently apply pressure to the leash and call your cat to you. Praise him when he responds. Eventually, he will become used to following you when he is on his leash.

Once your cat is on a leash, you can finally take him outside without worrying that he will use your neighbor's vegetable garden as a big litter box.

Common Cat Health Problems

If you've never owned a cat before, you may not realize that cats can suffer from quite a few different health problems. Some of these problems are easily preventable, while others are hereditary.

One of the most common cat health problems is the hairball. Cats groom themselves constantly with their tongues. The loose hair comes off on their tongues and is swallowed. Sometimes the hair gradually forms into a ball instead of passing through the cat's body. If your cat starts coughing and hacking, he may have a hairball. Usually, the cat will expel the ball on his own. To prevent hairballs, groom your cat frequently to remove loose hair. In addition, feed your cat food that helps control hairballs. Recently, cat treats that help control hairballs have become available, as well.

Another common health problem in cats is the urinary tract infection. This infection is particularly common in un-neutered male cats, although female cats can also develop this problem. If your cat has suddenly stopped using his litter box, a urinary tract infection could be the culprit. If your cat's urine smells strong, you should suspect a urinary tract infection. These infections need to be treated by your veterinarian. Be sure to ask about cat foods that help alleviate the chance of an infection re-occurring.

There are also several dangerous viruses that cats can catch. Feline Infectious Peritonitis, Feline Immunodeficiency Virus, and Feline Leukemia Virus.

FIP is a disease that is related to Corona virus. This problem is serious, because there is no known treatment for the disease. Cats who test positive for this disease may not actually have it, as Corona gives the same result on the titer. There is a vaccine for FIP, but many veterinarians and scientists say that it actually is not very effective. Luckily, this disease is not as easy to catch as some other diseases.

FIV, or cat AIDS, is not always fatal. Some people are afraid that they will catch HIV from a cat with FIV, but that cannot happen.

FLV is preventable if the cat has not been exposed to the virus before being immunized. Although the disease is not always immediately fatal, cats with FLV rarely have a long life expectancy. You should never bring other cats into your household when you have a cat with FLV.

Worms are also a problem for many cats. Roundworms, tapeworms, and hookworms are the most common types that infect cats. However, they can occasionally develop heart worms, as well. If your cat seems unable to gain weight, is infested with fleas, or has white specks that look like grains of rice in his stools, you should take him to the veterinarian to be tested for worms. A cat with worms is easily cured with a few doses of medication, but worms can prove fatal if left untreated.

Finally, if your cat spends time outdoors, you should keep a close eye on him for ticks. If you find a tick on your cat's body and he has been acting lethargic or moving slowly and acting as if

he was in pain, you should ask your veterinarian to test him for Lyme Disease. This disease is transmitted to people and animals by ticks.

Cat Vaccinations – Protecting Your Cat

One of the most important things you can do for your cat is to be sure its health is protected. Cat vaccinations can protect your cat from many common cat ailments.

You should begin vaccinating your kitten when he is six to eight weeks old. Before this time, his mother's antibodies have been protecting him from many of the diseases that vaccinations protect against. However, now that he is weaned, he will need to develop his own antibodies.

On your kitten's first veterinarian visit, your veterinarian will give him a physical examination. He should also complete a fecal exam to be sure your kitten doesn't have worms. Before your veterinarian vaccinates your kitten, he should do a blood test to be sure the kitten is not already infected with Feline Leukemia. He may also test for Feline Infectious Peritonitis. The tests do not take long. Your veterinarian will have preliminary results in minutes. If your kitten is not already infected with one of these diseases, your veterinarian will give your kitten his first Feline Leukemia and FIP vaccines if he is at risk for these diseases. An only cat who never leaves his home may not need these two vaccines and your veterinarian may recommend against giving them.

However, your kitten should receive his first FVRCP vaccine whether he leaves the house or not. This vaccine is actually a combination of several vaccines. FVRCP protects kittens from rhinotracheitis, calicivirus, panleukopenia and chlamydia.

Your kitten should visit your veterinarian again in two to four weeks, when he is eight to twelve weeks old. At this time, he will get a second FVRCP vaccine and a second FIP and Feline Leukemia vaccine. If he was wormed during his first visit, he will also receive his second worming. Kittens who are twelve weeks old and spend time outdoors should also receive their first Rabies vaccine at this time.

The third visit to your kitten's veterinarian should occur when he is ten to sixteen weeks old. During this visit, he will receive his third FVRCP vaccine. Kittens who were too young to receive their first Rabies vaccine on their second visit should be given the vaccine this time.

Once your kitten has completed his third set of FVRCP vaccines, he will not need any more injections until he is one year old. At that time, he will need a Rabies and FVRCP vaccine. As long as the Rabies shot is given within one year of the first Rabies vaccine, it will be good for three years. However, your cat will need to return for a FVRCP vaccine each year. If your cat received FIP and Feline Leukemia vaccines as a kitten, he will also receive boosters for these shots when he is one year of age.

While vaccines are usually safe, some of them do occasionally have side effects. Feline Leukemia vaccines can actually cause a form of cancer at the injection site. This is the reason

most veterinarians do not recommend giving the vaccine to cats who are not at risk. Other vaccines can also occasionally cause tumors at the vaccination site. Many times, the tumor can be removed before it spreads. This side effect is rare enough that the risk of catching a disease without vaccinations is much higher. If you notice a lump develop at the injection site, tell your veterinarian, as these lumps usually are a simple reaction to the injection, but can develop into a tumor.

Cat Grooming – Keep Your Cat Looking Great

Cats do not like to be dirty. Most cats spend a good part of their day licking their paws and face to stay clean and tidy. However, despite this, few cat owners think about grooming their cats.

However, grooming a cat is very important. This process helps remove loose hair from your cat's body. Without brushing, a lot of this hair would have ended up in your cat's stomach. Since hair is not easily digestible, it often forms hairballs. While cats can sometimes cough up hairballs, they can clog the intestinal tract, as well. In addition, grooming can remove dirt and debris from your cat's coat. It is also a great opportunity to check for fleas and ticks.

If you thought your cat would hate to be groomed, you may be surprised at how much he actually enjoys the experience. Of course, it is much easier to accustom your cat to brushes and combs when he is still a young kitten. Gently brush or comb over your kitten's coat, following the grain of the fur from his neck to his tail. If he begins to grow irritable, stop grooming him and play with him for a few minutes until he is relaxed. Do not groom his face or paws with the brush or comb, as most cats do not like this.

For cats who do not like to be brushed, you can try a different grooming tool, the grooming glove. While your cat is happily enjoying a nice, luxurious kitty massage, the glove is working to remove loose hair and debris, just as a brush would do. Your cat should not mind having his face groomed with a glove, but he may still object to having his paws groomed.

While you are brushing your cat's coat, be sure you take the time to check out his eyes and ears. His eyes should be clear and bright, without matter in their corners. His ears should be clean and pink. Excess dirt in a cat's ears can be a sign of ear mites. These mites can actually cause the ears to shrivel up and your cat can lose his hearing, so be sure to take your little guy to the veterinarian if you suspect mites.

Next, if your cat is not de-clawed, you should use pet nail clippers to remove the hooks on the ends of his claws. If these hooks snag on things and get caught, it can be painful both to your cat and your possessions. You should also check his teeth to be sure there is no tartar buildup. Since teeth problems can lead to serious health conditions, you may want to brush your cat's teeth once a day with a finger tip brush and pet toothpaste.

Finally, if you have a long haired cat and his coat has become matted, you may need to have him shaved. Most cats need to be sedated since they will not tolerate the animal clippers, so

you may have to take your cat to the veterinarian to be groomed. Being shaved is a stressful experience for your cat, so it is best to avoid this process by keeping his coat tangle free.

Neutering – An Important Part of Your Cat's Care

With the large number of homeless and feral cats in the world, it is no wonder that people are beginning to realize the importance of neutering their cats. After all, since cats can reproduce several times a year and mature quickly, just two feral cats can quickly become twenty.

These feral cats are often actually unaltered pet cats that were released by owners who no longer could care for them. A colony of feral cats can spread diseases to pet cats and dogs in the area. Even when the cats are fairly healthy, they are often infested with fleas. When female cats are in heat, the colony can literally keep people up all night with their fighting and crying. Hungry cats will raid the trashcan and playful kittens will destroy shrubbery and soil lawn furniture.

Besides reducing the number of unwanted kittens, spaying and neutering cats provides several other important benefits. Many people cannot handle the racket caused by a cat in heat. Soon the sound of your female house cat mewling pitifully at the door is joined by the yowling and fighting of every tom cat in the neighborhood. Un-neutered tom cats have a tendency to roam far from home if they are outdoor cats. Both indoor and outdoor tom cats will mark every new object with their odorous spray.

Unaltered cats are also more prone to certain types of cancer than altered cats. These cancers of the reproductive organs are very rare in cats that are altered by one year of age. In addition, unaltered cats can develop several contagious reproductive diseases.

Of course, there is also a downside to altering your cat. Unlike altered dogs, cats that are altered can compete in the show ring. However, if your cat wins a championship, other people may want one of your cat's kittens and you will not be able to have a litter.

Cats can be altered at quite a young age. Some humane societies will alter kittens as young as eight weeks. However, most veterinarians agree that it is healthier to alter kittens at five to six months, unless they are feral kittens who are trapped to be altered and then released back into their colonies or they are in a home with other unaltered cats.

Neutering is harder on female kittens than male kittens, so if you have both male and female kittens, you may want to neuter the males at a younger age and wait to neuter your females until they are six months old.

Although cats rarely have problems after being neutered, sometimes their incisions become infected. Check your cat once a day to be sure the area has not turned puffy and red. If you notice your cat licking and chewing at the stitches from the surgery, you may need to talk to your veterinarian about using a surgery collar to keep the cat from being able to reach the

stitches. In addition, while male cats can be active and bouncy without injuring themselves, female cats will need to be confined indoors for three to five days after the surgery.

The Cat Bath - How To Wash Your Cat

Everyone knows that cats absolutely hate water, so why on earth would someone want to bathe their cat? Well, although cats don't enjoy paddling in the swimming pool with their doggie pals, they still can get just as dirty or flea infested as dogs. There are times when there is just no other option besides giving your cat a bath. As long as you do not bathe your cat more frequently than once a month, you will not damage his hair or skin.

Before you begin bathing your cat, you will need to gather a few supplies. At the minimum, you will need two absorbent terry cloth towels, a pet safe shampoo, a pet safe conditioner, a sponge, and a sprayer attachment for your sink or tub. If you don't have a sprayer attachment, you should have a pitcher or large cup that you can use to scoop clean water over your cat's body. Ideally, you should also have a non-skid mat to help your cat feel more secure.

If you decide to bathe your cat in the tub, you may have a harder time holding on to him if he becomes frightened. However, it is usually easier to keep him contained if he escapes in a bathroom than in the kitchen.

Place your non-skid mat in the bottom of the sink or tub. Add two to three inches of warm water and gently place your cat in the tub. Talk to him quietly and reassure him. He will most likely settle down within a few seconds. Once he is calm, begin to wet him down. If the sprayer attachment scares him too badly, you may have to pour water over him using your pitcher or cup, instead. Do not pour water on his head. You will clean his face later.

Once your cat is wet, squeeze out a palm sized dollop of shampoo and thoroughly massage the shampoo into his coat. If you use slow, calming motions, he may even actually relax and enjoy this part of the bath.

After the shampoo is sufficiently lathered, it is time to rinse your cat off. Be sure you get all of the shampoo residue out, as the residue can really irritate his skin if it isn't removed.

Now, work a palm sized dollop of conditioner into your cat's coat and then rinse it out. This step is actually optional if the cat has short hair. However, conditioner will not hurt a short haired cat, so, if he is not too upset, you may still want to use it.

Once your cat's body is clean, dampen your sponge and use it to carefully wipe down his face. Pay close attention to the area under his eyes.

Finally, wrap your cat in one of the towels and blot most of the water from his body. Replace the wet towel with your other dry towel and continue to blot his coat dry. After the second towel is damp, your cat should be dry enough to finish the job himself. If you have a long

haired cat, you may want to see if he will tolerate a hair dryer on the lowest setting. However, be sure to keep the dryer moving constantly so you do not burn his skin.

Cat Flea Control – Get Rid of Those Itchy Insects

Has your cat become infested with fleas or ticks? If his buggy skin has been keeping you up all night, it is time for you to get those fleas or ticks under control.

Even the cleanest cats can end up with a flea infestation. All it takes to turn your flealess pet into a flea bag is one friendly stray cat or dog that comes along for a visit and leaves his fleas behind. When a person or cat walks outside, he will pick up the fleas and bring them inside. Even one flea can lay quite a few eggs. When the eggs hatch, you will have a full scale infestation.

Some people don't want to risk having fleas or ticks at all and use a flea and tick preventative before the insects even appear. Two of the most well known flea and tick preventatives for cats are Frontline and Advantix. These products both come as pre-measured liquid treatments. The treatment is applied directly to your cat's skin and works to kill fleas and ticks right away when they hop on your cat.

However, most people wait until they see fleas or ticks before they begin fighting them. Of course, if you see tiny black or dark brown insects hopping around, there is little doubt that your cat is flea infested. By the time you see fleas, though, you probably already have a major infestation on your hands.

Why not make sure you catch any flea problems right away by looking for signs of fleas on a regular basis. To look for fleas, you should have a flea comb. Carefully comb through your cat's hair, paying close attention to the hair around his head and on his belly. Fleas like to hide around a cat's ears, eyes, and nose. They also tend to hang out in the creases where a cat's legs and body meet.

If you catch a flea, you will know that your cat is starting to develop a flea infestation. However, what if your cat has a flea that could make stealth operatives look like amateurs? While the flea may be able to evade your comb, the dirt he leaves behind will not. If you see specks of blackish dirt in the comb's teeth, this is evidence that fleas are hiding somewhere on your cat.

To find ticks, run your hands over your cat's body, looking for any raised spots. If you find a raised spot, check it closely to see if it has little legs. If so, your cat has a tick. Ask your veterinarian about having the tick removed, as removing one yourself can often result in the tick's head staying behind in your cat's skin.

To get those cat fleas and ticks under control, you can use one of the liquid flea and tick treatments, flea or tick collars, and flea and tick baths. If your house has become flea infested, you may also need to use powder or spray on your cat's bedding and your upholstered

furniture. If all else fails, you can use a flea and tick bomb on your house, but be sure to keep your pets out of the building for at least twenty four hours.

Cat Hairballs

Has your cat been coughing and hacking? If so, he may have hairballs. If you see disgusting skinny oval blobs on the floor, you will know that your cat has managed to dislodge one of his hairballs.

What exactly is a hairball? It is a mass of hair and food that did not digest that forms inside a cat's body. Loose hair that collects on his tongue when he grooms himself. For some reason, the hair comes together and forms a ball in his stomach instead of simply passing through his body. Since these hairballs aren't able to break down and be digested, cats often cough them up to get rid of them.

While most cats don't have a problem with dislodging hairballs, they can occasionally pass into a cat's intestines and cause a blockage. This can be a life threatening problem. There are a few signs you should look for to find out if your cat's hairball is dangerous. If your cat seems to be constipated, he may be experiencing a small blockage. If he seems lethargic and his coat is dull and unhealthy looking, or he is eating less than usual, then he may have a serious blockage. Either way, you should take him to your veterinarian to be sure a hairball is the problem and to have it removed.

Of course, it is much better to prevent hairballs than to treat them after they have formed. One of the easiest ways to keep your cat from developing a hairball is to groom him frequently, especially if he has long hair. Thoroughly comb or brush his hair each day to remove excess hair. If you begin this routine when he is a kitten, he will actually look forward to being groomed. In fact, some cats will even bring their combs to their owners so that they can be groomed. If your cat doesn't care for brushes and combs, try a grooming glove, instead.

If your cat still seems to form occasional hairballs, there are several dietary aids that you can try. One of these aids is dry cat food that was developed to help prevent hairballs. However, don't just buy the first bag of hairball formula cat food you see. Be sure that it is high in protein and other nutrients, as well. If your cat already has a hairball, you may want to shop for a gel that can be added to his food that will help the hairball pass through his body. This gel is actually a lubricant. Talk to your veterinarian before using one of these hairball remedies for a long period of time, as they can end up removing important vitamins and minerals along with hairballs.

Finally, some people have their own remedies and recipes for removing hairballs. Before using folk remedies to treat your cat, please consult with your veterinarian to be sure you aren't unintentionally causing harm to some other part of your cat's body. A few common folk remedies are butter, mineral oil, and pumpkin.

TYPES OF CATS:

Is the Oriental the Right Breed For You?

Do you love the temperament of the Siamese cat breed, but wish you could find a cat with a very different coat color? If so, the exuberantly affectionate Oriental is the perfect breed for you. These charming cats are closely related to the Siamese and are even considered to be Siamese by many cat associations. However, the Cat Fanciers Association considers these cats to be a distinct breed that just happens to be descended from the Siamese cat breed.

The Oriental was originally a shorthair breed, but longhairs are now available, as well. While the Oriental breed is said to have been founded in Great Britain in the nineteen fifties, Siamese with a wide range of colors have been around for hundreds of years. In the early nineteen hundreds, breeders decided they only wanted Siamese to come in the traditional point colors, and the color variations became much less common. In the nineteen fifties, there was a renewed interest in the colored Siamese, and British breeders began to call these cats Foreigns. However, American breeders called them Orientals, and British breeders decided to go with that name to make things a bit less confusing.

Like the Siamese, these cats have big ears, a triangular head, almond shaped, green eyes, a graceful, long body, and a long tail that tapers at the end. This breed weighs in at nine to fourteen pounds. You can find the lovely Oriental in Black, Havana, Cinnamon, Red, Blue, Lilac, Fawn, Cream, Caramel, Apricot, and Foreign White. This breed also comes in tortoiseshell, tabby, silver tabby, smoke, shaded, and tipped patterns of most of these striking colors.

If you like quiet cats, the Oriental may not be the best cat for you. Just like their relatives the Siamese, these cats are very vocal. They often will join in when their favorite people are having a conversation. However, if you don't mind the vocalizations of these chatty cats, you will find that you have a very affectionate and loving pet.

The Oriental is devoted to his family and does not like to spend long hours alone. If you don't spend much time at home, you should consider adding a second cat to the household to give your lonely cat some company. These cats do quite well in multiple cat households, since another cat gives them someone to play with. Of course, this active cat breed will get into twice as much mischief when there is another cat to plot and plan with.

If you aren't fond of grooming cats, you should probably plan to own a shorthair Oriental, since these cats need very little grooming. However, the longhair still does not have extensive grooming needs, since these cats have silky, mid-length hair. Grooming your cat once a week should be sufficient, especially during the summer months, when the longhair sheds most of its coat.

If you want a cat with the personality of the Siamese cat, but wish the breed came in a different coat color, then the lovely Oriental may just be the perfect breed for you.

Perhaps a Persian is What You're Seeking?

The grumpy looking face and long coat of the beautiful Persian cat are familiar characteristics to most cat lovers. After all, this striking cat breed has been well known since it was first developed in the eighteen hundreds. However, these cats are certainly not the perfect breed for everyone, since caring for the lush coat of the Persian breed can be a bit time consuming.

The Persian's most well known characteristic is probably it's face. This breed has tiny, rounded ears, very round eyes that are set far apart, and a short nose that gives the cat's face a pushed in appearance. A large, muscular body, a short neck, stocky legs, and a short, bushy tail complete the cat's distinctive look. These cats weigh in at eight to fifteen pounds.

However, Persians are also well known for their long, thick coats. A well groomed cat is breath taking. Hair flows gracefully around his body. Of course, if the cat has not been properly groomed, he can look quite shabby instead. This breed has a coat that tangles and becomes matted very quickly. You should be prepared to groom your cat once a day to keep his coat in good shape. Cats that do develop bad tangles will have to be clipped down to the skin. This is very stressful for the cat, since he will have to be sedated. In addition, clipping will make him more susceptible to the cold in winter months.

The Persian's beautiful coat comes in Black, Chocolate, Red, Blue, Lilac, Cream, Chinchilla, Silver, and White colors. White cats can have blue, orange, or mismatched eye colors. You can also find this breed in tortoiseshell, shaded, smoke, tipped, tabby, silver tabby, and bicolor patterns.

If you don't think you can handle an extremely active and overly affectionate cat, then the Persian may be the ideal choice for you. This breed is not very talkative and is much calmer and more placid than most other cat breeds. These laid back cats are also a good choice for multiple cat homes or for homes with both cats and dogs, as they rarely fight with other animals. If your cat doesn't care for another pet, he will most likely just stay out of the other animal's way. The Persian's calm temperament also makes it a good family pet. These cats are fairly tolerant of children, as long as they are not abused. Just be sure that toddlers do not start yanking on your cat's tail and everything should be fine.

While most Persians are usually fairly healthy cats, there are a few serious problems that are common to this breed. These cats are often prone to kidney disease, breathing problems that are the result of their compacted faces, and reproductive problems. In addition, blue eyed white Persians are prone to deafness.

If you are looking for a cat that is content to doze on the windowsills and enjoys an occasional petting, then the gentle Persian may just be the right cat for you and your family.

So You Want A Norwegian Forest Cat

The thick coated Norwegian Forest Cat originated in chilly Norway during the early nineteen hundreds, but its ancestors accompanied the warlike Vikings as they sailed around the world.

The cats kept their owners company, but they also had a more important purpose, rodent control. The Norwegian's exceptional hunting ability enabled it to keep the Viking food supply mouse free during long voyages at sea and at home in the village. These big cats are often thought to be unfriendly and aloof by strangers, but are actually quite loving and affectionate with family members.

Norwegian Forest Cats are solidly built, with big bodies and long, powerful legs. Many cat fanciers say the Norwegian reminds them of the Lynx, a wild cat with a similar appearance. This breed's graceful, furry tail is as long as its body and covered in long hair that gives it a graceful appearance. The head of this cat is triangular and its brilliant green eyes have a slight slant. Overall, the breed looks very alert, instead of having a traditional placid appearance. This breed comes in a wide range of colors, including white and black. You can find the Norwegian in self, tortoiseshell, smoke, tipped, tabby, and silver tabby patterns.

While the Norwegian Forest Cat's thick, long coat looks beautiful, you should be prepared to do a bit of grooming to keep it that way. You will have to brush this cat's coat out once a week or your cat may end up with a matted and tangled coat that will need to be shaved off. Since clipping a cat can be quite stressful for him, try to keep his coat free of tangles.

If you are looking for a playful, active cat, that loves strangers, then the Norwegian Forest Cat is probably the wrong breed for you. These cats are fairly quiet and dignified and are very reserved with people they do not know well, although they will happily unbend to romp with their favorite people. While Norwegians aren't energetic, silly cats, this breed can still make wonderful family pets. The Norwegian becomes very attached to his family and is very devoted and loving.

Since this breed is fairly self contained, the Norwegian Forest Cat is an ideal breed for busy professionals. His quiet nature makes him ideal for apartments or condos with thin walls, as he won't disturb neighbors who don't like cats. While this cat won't usually quarrel with a second cat, he doesn't actually need the companionship to keep him happy. As long as his owners give him a bit of attention in the morning and evening, feed him, and groom him, the Norwegian is quite content with his life. Of course, he won't refuse extra companionship and attention, either.

So, if you want a cat with a warrior past and a gentle nature, then the Norwegian Forest Cat may just be the ideal breed for you. After all, if these beautiful cats were loved by the legendary Vikings, they have to be special.

A Look At the Fascinating Ocicat

Have you always been an admirer of the beautiful and dangerous leopards and ocelots? While these spotted big cats can be lethal pets, there is a domesticated cat with the same exotic appearance, the Ocicat. These cats were actually developed completely by accident when a breeder in the United States was trying to create a Siamese of a different color by breeding a Siamese cat to an Abyssinian cat and ended up with a lovely spotted kitten instead. Of course, while the Ocicat may look wild, this breed actually has a wonderful personality.

The Ocicat is a medium sized cat, weighing in at six to fourteen pounds. Its powerful, graceful body is set on muscular legs. This breed's head has a distinct wedge shape, which is topped by large, Siamese like ears. These cats have eyes with a slightly Oriental shape that are surrounded by dark color. Many cat enthusiasts say this rim of color makes these cats look as though they are wearing glasses. A long, gracefully tapered tail completes the wild appearance of this breed.

While the original Ocicat was ivory colored with golden spots, there are now many additional recognized colors. You can find these spotted cats in Tawny, Chocolate, Cinnamon, Blue, Lavender, and Fawn colors. In addition, these cats come in spotted tabby, spotted silver tabby, and spotted smoke patterns of all of the above colors.

If you are a busy person who is rarely at home, you should not own an Ocicat. These cats are extremely people oriented and become depressed and upset if they are left alone for long periods of time. This love of human company makes this breed the ideal family cat. In fact, even visiting family and friends will be happily welcomed by these outgoing cats. While the Ocicat thrives on human attention, this sociable cat also enjoys the company of other cats, making it an excellent breed choice for a multiple cat home.

These cats are very playful, so to keep your Ocicat happy, you should be sure to provide plenty of toys. However, this doesn't mean you need to break the piggy bank. Simple toys, like a big feather or a crumpled piece of paper, provide hours of entertainment for these sweet natured cats.

The Ocicat is one of the most intelligent cat breeds. You can easily teach your cat simple commands, such as how to come and fetch, but don't stop there. These quick learners have been able to learn quite a few other commands, as well.

People who don't enjoy grooming their cats will be happy to know that the Ocicat does not actually need to be groomed frequently. A quick brushing once a week should keep your cat looking sleek and healthy. However, since this breed enjoys the attention, you may want to groom your cat several times a week.

If you want to own a cat that looks as striking as the jungle cats, then you may just want to consider the Ocicat. These cats provide the best of both worlds - a wild look and a sweet nature.

About the Ragamuffin Cat Breed

If you are looking for a cat breed that won't mind if your children decide they want to play dress up, you may want to take a look at the Ragamuffin cat breed. These cats are very tolerant of children and other pets and will allow children to play games that would have other cat breeds and even many dog breeds running for cover.

The same characteristics that make the Ragamuffin such a wonderful family pet make it a bad choice for people who are not home for long periods of time. This breed thrives on attention

and enjoys 'helping' its family do routine household chores, such as putting away groceries or folding laundry. Spending a lot of time alone can make your cat very unhappy. After all, a cat breed that will ride around in your child's doll carriage or attend a tea party obviously loves plenty of company and attention.

The Ragamuffin is one of the biggest cat breeds, weighing in at a very hefty ten to twenty pounds. Although these cats have larger than normal bones, part of their weight also comes from their tendency to carry a bit of extra fat on their bellies. This breed has a big, solidly built body, a wedge shaped head that is a bit round and large eyes that are so expressive that many people say that their cats seem to talk with their eyes. This breed has a long, gracefully tapered tail that is covered in long hair, giving it a bushy appearance. You can find the Ragamuffin in almost any coat color and any pattern. However cats with points can not be shown.

The Cat Fancier's Association classifies the Ragamuffin as a member of the Miscellaneous class. This cat breed is the only one currently in this category. As the breed becomes more established, it will eventually move to the Provisional class. While the Ragamuffin can be shown, it can not receive any ribbons or awards until it moves from the Miscellaneous class and into a different class.

Ragamuffins have long hair with an extremely soft texture. Despite the fact that these cats are longhairs, the silkiness of their hair makes them easy to care for. This breed is not prone to developing matted hair and one of these cats only needs to be groomed about once a week to keep his coat looking beautiful and tangle free.

Since these cats have a tendency to carry a few more pounds than necessary around their stomachs, you may need to keep a close eye on your Ragamuffin's weight. If he grows too overweight, you should ask your veterinarian about feeding your cat a weight management cat food. Except for this weight problem, this cat breed has no hereditary health conditions and is an extremely healthy breed overall.

If you want a large, gentle cat that actually enjoys being around children, then the Ragamuffin is the perfect breed for you.

Is the Ragdoll the Right Breed for You?

During the mid nineteen hundreds, an American breeder developed a cat breed that was so laid back and relaxed that it would hang limply like a cloth doll when people held it. This breed was developed from a Birman cat and a longhair cat with an unknown ancestry. The breeder called these cats the Ragdoll because of their calm, relaxed nature. Although the Cat Fancier's Association did not recognize these first cats as the Ragdoll, their descendants became the gentle Ragdolls we know today.

This breed is one of the largest of the cat breeds, weighing between ten and twenty pounds. It is no surprise that such heavy cats have big, muscular bodies. Their heads are slightly round, their ears are small and rounded, and their large eyes are in a brilliant blue color. This breed's tail is slightly bushy and tapers at the end.

The Ragdoll does not come in a wide range of colors and patterns. In fact, there are actually only four colors accepted by the Cat Fancier's Association, Seal, Chocolate, Blue, and Lilac. You can find these colors in pointed, mitted, or bicolor patterns, but some breeders avoid mitted cats because they look too much like the breed's Birman ancestors.

The Ragdoll's calm demeanor makes it the perfect choice for families. These cats are almost dog like in their behavior, greeting family members at the door, following them through the house, and snuggling down beside them on the sofa. If you do not believe in de-clawing your cat, but are concerned about having your furniture ruined, you may want to consider this breed as well. Some Ragdoll owners say their cats have learned to use a scratching post instead of furniture arms to sharpen their claws much more quickly than their other cat breeds. Since these cats seem to make an effort to keep from scratching people, as well, they may be less prone to scratch furniture in the first place.

While this cat breed does not need the company of other pets and seems to prefer to spend time with family members over cats, it does not mind living with other cats. Perhaps this is because this breed is so much larger than other cats, but it is most likely because the Ragdoll is just so sweet natured.

Since the Ragdoll is a longhair cat, some prospective cat owners are a bit hesitant about choosing this breed. They are afraid they won't have time for the frequent grooming most longhairs require. However, this breed's silky coat texture makes it a very low care cat. Combing through your cat's hair weekly to remove stray hairs or debris is all that is necessary to keep his coat looking fantastic. One thing you may want to keep in mind is that although most longhairs are prone to hairballs, these cats rarely develop them.

If you want a sweet tempered, family oriented cat, then the big Ragdoll may be the ideal breed for you.

A Look At the Koret Cat Breed

If you are at all superstitious, you may want to take a look at the Koret cat breed. This breed originated in Thailand well before the seventeen hundreds. The Thai people believed that the silvery blue color of this stunning breed stood for monetary wealth, while the brilliant green eyes of the breed symbolized abundant crops, since this was the same color of immature rice grains. It is no wonder that the Thai believed a newly married couple should receive a pair of Koret cats to ensure a successful marriage.

Today, hundreds of years later, the Koret is still a blue cat with unusually green eyes. While lilac cats are occasionally sighted in European countries, the lilac cats are not currently accepted by breed associations and are not likely to ever become accepted. After all, this breed has a strong tradition behind its spectacular silver blue color.

When you first see an adult Koret, you will probably focus on his enormous, round green eyes. These eyes are a very unusual shade of green, unique to the breed. Surprisingly enough, it can take up to four years for the striking green color to develop, as kittens are born with amber

colored eyes. This breed is medium sized, weighing in at six to eleven pounds and has a stocky, compact body, a heart shaped face, and big ears. The cat's medium length tail tapers gracefully at the tip.

While most cats have keen senses, the Koret is famous for its acute hearing, sight, and sense of smell. Of course, there are plenty of advantages to these heightened senses and this may be one of the reasons these cats seem to be so lucky. After all, it can be hard for predators to sneak up on a cat who seems to see and hear everything. However, there also are disadvantages. Korets do not care for noisy environments, since they have such good hearing. People planning to show their cats need to start accustoming them to the cat show world as kittens or they will not be able to handle all of the noise and confusion that comes along with a show.

People looking for an undemanding and quietly affectionate cat may not want to choose a Koret. These cats are known for their bossy, pushy attitudes. Your cat will demand affection when it suits him and ignore you if he doesn't want to be bothered. Some people feel that this breed is similar to a grumbling, moody teenager. However, these guys are also very friendly and playful when they are in the proper mood. With these mood swings, the Koret is not the best choice for a family, especially if there are young children.

Since the Koret is so rare, it is not surprising that there are occasional health problems with the breed. If you decide to choose one of these cats, be sure to have your pet tested for neuromuscular problems. Luckily, the disorder is fairly uncommon, but it is best to rule it out immediately.

So, if you are willing to put up with a cat that has a slightly prima dona attitude because you believe it could bring you luck, then the Koret may be the perfect breed for you.

Is the La Perm Right For You?

If you've ever seen a cat breed that looks like it is having a bad hair day, you may have been looking at the La Perm, a breed that is probably closely related to the Rex cat breed. These cats have a wavy coat reminiscent of the hair permanents that were so popular in the nineteen eighties, which could be why they received this name. After all, the breed originated in the United States in the early eighties.

The La Perm is not a cuddly house cat. These cats excel at mousing and enjoy romping outdoors. This is not surprising, since they may look like the Oriental cat breeds, but they actually are descended from an American barn cat. If you are looking for a docile, placid indoor cat, you won't be happy owning a La Perm. However, this breed has a very affectionate and playful nature and is often an excellent choice for families looking for a pet or for multiple cat families.

Since the La Perm comes in both longhair and shorthair varieties, you can still enjoy this breed if you don't quite have the time to care for a longhair cat. The longhair has a graceful, plumed tail, while the shorthair has a much plainer tail. Both types of this cat have big eyes, a wedge

shaped head and a muscular body. The shorthair has ears that are slightly Oriental in appearance, while the longhair has more rounded eyes. These cats are on the large side, weighing in at a hefty eight to twelve pounds. Both breeds also have a distinct undercoat and an overcoat, although the longhair has a thicker undercoat.

The La Perm comes in almost every color and pattern, since the breed originated from barn cats and the founding breeder did not realize how unique the cats were for several years and did not breed for specific types or colors. In fact, since the founding kitten of the breed was completely bald, she was most likely just thankful to see her kitten finally grow any hair at all. Not all kittens in the breed are bald at such a young age, but they all go through a stage where they lose their kitten coats and have not yet developed their curly adult coats.

Since these cats are a relatively new breed, the Cat Fancier's Association has classified the La Perm as a breed in the Provisional Class, along with only two other cat breeds. Eventually, if this breed continues to hold true to type, it will be moved to the Championship Class, instead.

Since the La Perm has such a wide gene pool it is no surprise that the breed is so healthy and vigorous. As long as you make sure your kitten receives the proper immunizations, you should be able to look forward to a long and happy life with your new pet.

If you want a cat with an affectionate and intelligent nature that is also very unique, then the curly coated La Perm may just be the right cat breed for you.

Is the Maine Coon the Right Breed For You?

Are you a dog lover who wants to own a cat? If so, you may want to take a look at the extraordinary Maine Coon cat breed. This breed is extraordinary intelligent and has a personality that is not exactly cat like. If you think all cats act the same, you probably haven't seen a Maine Coon decide to take a leisurely dip in your family's wading pool.

The Maine Coon is known as a gentle giant, which is not surprising, since these lovely cats weigh in at anywhere from nine to twenty two pounds. The breed has a squarish face, a thick neck, large ears, big, rounded eyes, and a large, muscular body. The tail is long and quite bushy.

This cat breed was first seen in Maine in the late eighteen hundreds and most likely developed its thick coat as a way to protect itself from the bitterly cold winters in that area. When the breed was first established, only the brown tabby color was recognized. This coat color and the Maine Coon's bushy tail gave it the look of a raccoon, and it is probably this appearance that gave these cats their name. Today, this breed comes in many more recognized colors, including black, blue, cream, red, tortoiseshell, blue tortoiseshell, white, smoke, silver tabby, brown tabby, red tabby, blue tabby, cream tabby, and bicolors. Cats can have green or gold eyes, unless they are white, in which case, eyes can also be blue or mismatched.

The Maine Coon gets along well with other cats, dogs, children, and just about every other type of animal, except mice. This breed is notorious for its excellent hunting abilities. These cats

have a wonderful personality and are the perfect cat breed for families. However, they are also content being the only animal in a quiet household.

If you want an extremely quiet cat, then the Maine Coon may not be the perfect choice for you. These cats are a bit on the vocal side. However, the mewling these cats make is a pleasant chirping sound that few people find to be annoying.

With the long coat this breed has, it is no surprise that the Maine Coon needs frequent grooming. You should be prepared to thoroughly comb out your cat's coat at least twice a week. If the coat begins to develop knots and snarls, you may need to groom him even more frequently.

Overall, this descendant of hardy farm cats is a healthy breed. If your cat seems to be feeling under the weather, he most likely has a hairball problem. Of course, you should seek veterinary care to be sure he does not have any more serious problems. While you are talking to your veterinarian, you may want to consult him about feeding your cat a cat food with hairball control.

Since the Maine Coon is said to be the most popular breed in the world, it would be no surprise if you decided that you wanted to own one of these beautiful animals. If you want an intelligent and loving cat, this breed may be the perfect choice for you.

About the Manx Cat Breed

When you picture a cat in your mind, the animal probably has a long, gracefully tapering tail. However, one cat breed actually has no tail at all, the Manx cat. While tailless Manx cats are the only type of cat seen in the show ring, you can also find cats known as stumpies or tailies. These cats make wonderful pets, but are disqualified from the show ring because they are not tailless.

The Manx cat is a very historical breed that was first established before the seventeen hundreds on the Isle of Man. Because this cat has longer back legs than front legs, it walks with an unusual gait that many people say looks very much like a bunny hop. When these cats stand still, they hold their back legs bent so that their backs are still fairly straight. Despite its small, very rounded body, the Manx is still solidly built and the breed weighs in at a respectable eight to twelve pounds. This breed's head is wide and slightly rounded, with prominent cheeks. This cat's long ears are slightly rounded at the tips and its gold or amber eyes are very round. These unique cats come in almost every color and pattern available, just like its close relative, the British Shorthair.

Although the Manx is a quiet, occasional placid cat breed, this cat still has a very sweet and playful nature. The gentle attitude of this breed makes it an ideal choice for families, but these cats are also a good choice for career oriented individuals who aren't home for long periods of time. Although these cats don't dislike other cats, they don't need the company of cats to feel contented.

Children enjoy the playful nature of the Manx, which, despite its legs of different lengths, can leap higher than most other breeds. It is quite common for these cats to perch on top of doorways and refrigerators. Many people comment on the dog like traits of this breed. The Manx will actually bury or hide its favorite toys, just as a dog does. You can easily teach your cat to fetch, come when he is called, or other simple tricks.

If you live in an apartment and are concerned that a cat will disturb your neighbors, the quiet little Manx is an ideal choice. These cats can mewl, but usually choose not to.

This cat breed has both longhair and shorthair coats. The shorthair's coat is fairly thick, but very little grooming is necessary. The longhair has a silky coat that requires very little grooming, as well. Simply brushing through your Manx's coat once a week should be enough to keep him looking tidy. You should also accustom your cat to having his teeth brushed as a kitten, so you can control tartar and tooth decay as he ages.

If you want a quiet, playful cat with an unusual appearance, then the Manx just may be the ideal breed for you. After all, even if you can't bear the thought of owning a tailless cat, the tailies have all the characteristics of their tailless siblings.

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