



# KITTEN CARE GUIDE

## Preparing for and Living with Your Maine Street Coon

Maine Street Coons has carefully prepared this guide to help you and your family be well-prepared to bring home your Maine Coon kitten and live happily forever after. Whether you are a first-time cat parent or have been owned by cats for decades, we believe you'll find at least some of this information useful. Please follow our instructions carefully.

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## **Activate & Maintain Trupanion Pet Insurance**

**Your Maine Street Coons kitten comes with 30-days of free health coverage through [Trupanion](#).** In addition to this guide, we emailed you a Trupanion brochure that outlines the comprehensive coverage included in the complimentary 30-day policy provided by Maine Street Coons. The day or morning prior to pick up, please call the toll-free number provided in the brochure to activate your kitten's free coverage. You must provide the representative with our Breeder Activation code, also in the brochure, when you call. Our purchase agreement requires that you maintain this policy for the lifetime you own your cat, or you must have sufficient financial reserves to pay for up to \$10,000 in health care. Our goal is to ensure no cat born in our cattery is ever euthanized prematurely due to an inability to pay for treatment. Please reach out to Trupanion with any questions you might have regarding the coverage; they have great customer service.

**We have done everything within our power to lower your kitten's risk of genetic disease, but we do not control life itself.** Anytime you are dealing with a living creature, there is simply no way to predict with certainty what the future may hold. Injuries, accidents, and illness can happen at random, even in kittenhood, and such things can be very, very expensive to treat.

**We strongly advise that you specifically maintain Trupanion coverage for your Maine Coons' lifetime, and not another policy.** One of reasons we offer Trupanion with our kittens is because, provided there is never a lapse in coverage, your kitten/adult cat will never be subject to a pre-existing condition clause and all health conditions, including genetic conditions known to affect the Maine Coon breed, will be covered. This is rare with pet insurance and the value of this safety-net should not be overlooked. We never want cost to be a factor if you are faced with making tough decisions about how to best care for your beloved Maine Coon companion.

## **Veterinary Care & Preserving Your Health Guarantee**

**Prior to leaving, your Maine Coon kitten was examined at least 3 times by one of our licensed veterinarians (Dr. Wright, Dr. Mann, or Dr. Meyer at Cahaba Valley Animal Clinic) and found to be in good health at each appointment.** No heart murmurs, hernias, or other congenital defects were detected unless they have been expressly communicated to you. While being seen, your kitten was administered three sets of age-appropriate core vaccines, dewormed at appropriate intervals, administered the Purevax

1-year rabies vaccine, had their microchip implanted, and was screened and found to be free of parasites and infectious diseases.

**Now it is time for you to pick up where we left off by establishing care with a licensed veterinarian. Per your adoption contract, your kitten must have a wellness exam performed by the licensed veterinarian of your choosing within seventy-two hours of pick-up. This is critical to maintain your health guarantee.**

Failure to do so voids our generous health guarantee in its entirety.

**If you don't have a veterinarian**, we suggest searching for a [feline-friendly practice online](#). Ideally, we would recommend choosing a vet that is registered with the American Association of Feline Practitioners at <https://catfriendly.com/find-a-veterinary-professional/>, but that is not an option in many areas.

You may also want to cross-check this list with the list of [veterinarians that directly bill Trupanion health insurance](#), as a matter of convenience. This is very convenient as it (1) reduces the amount of money you must pay at the time of service, and (2) eliminates the need for you to file a claim for reimbursement.

*Helpful Hint: Vet practices are very busy, so you may have to wait two or more weeks to get a new patient appointment. Go ahead and make your kitten's appointment now!*

### **At Your Kitten's First Visit**

- **Please be sure to take your kitten's health record with you to their vet appointment.** Located in your go-home folder, this health record lists the vaccines and deworming administered by our vets, along with the dates on which they were given.
- **When asked, you do not need to test for FeLV and the vaccine is NOT recommended.** Maine Street Coons is an FeLV/FIV negative cattery and one kitten (at random) in every litter is tested just to be 100% sure all kittens are leaving free of the condition. Because you will continue to keep your kitten indoors and away from indoor/outdoor cats, there is minimal risk of them contracting feline leukemia during their lifetime. Research done by UC Davis shows that the FeLV vaccine is linked to injection site sarcomas (tumors), therefore the risks outweigh the benefits.

**Maine**  
STREET *Coons* **New Kitten Care Instructions**

- **Remember that your health guarantee will reimburse you for out-of-pocket treatment costs incurred up to \$200**, should your vet find a minor health condition requiring treatment at this first visit, per the terms outlined in your adoption contract.
- **Should your vet suspect your kitten has a genetic or life-threatening health condition, contact us immediately**. We will work with your vet to get to the bottom of what is going on, and should it be necessary, help you take advantage of the refund or exchange policy in your adoption contract. Please know that we will always ensure that any kitten returned to us receives the quality care it deserves. They are our babies for life!

## Setting Up Your Maine Coon Kitten's Safe Space

**Before bringing your kitten home, you will need to identify, setup, and kitten proof one room in the house where your kitten will live for the first one to two weeks.** Ideally, this will be your bedroom, a den, or a home office where you spend a lot of time each day, and to which you can restrict access to other pets and young children.

### **This room should have:**

- A dedicated space for their carrier.
- A dedicated space for the litterbox we provide.
- A food dish for the dry kibble we provide.
- A kitten-safe water fountain with clean water.
- A cozy cat bed, tent, or teepee to sleep in.
- A scratching post or a cat tree with a sisal post.
- Toys to keep your kitten stimulated and active.
- Covered electrical cords and outlets.

### **This room should not have:**

- Exposed outlets or electrical cords or wires.
- Long cords on drapes or window blinds.
- An open garbage can, bags of snack foods, or plastic/disposable food containers.
- Yarn, strings, twine, or hair ties (these may sound silly, but these are the most common items found during exploratory abdominal surgery due to bowel obstruction.)
- Critical items that other family members or pets must enter the room to retrieve.
- Open windows or doors that exit directly outdoors.

**Don't worry for a second that you are being cruel to your baby kitten.** The world is a large and intimidating place to a young kitten that has just been separated from its Mama and siblings for the first time. Leaving the home in which it was raised, where it was very accustomed to the people, sounds, smells, and sights that surrounded it since birth, is a lot for a baby cat to manage. We know from tried-and-true experience that it is far more manageable, comforting, confidence-building, and safe for your kitten to be given time to make this major life shift in a smaller, cozier space with a lot less going on than what transpires in the main parts of your house. Trust us and trust the process!

## **Introducing Kitten to Their Safe Room and Your Home**

**Your kitten will need time to get accustomed to you and its new surroundings before being put in a face-to-face situation with friends, family members, and pets.** We hate to be the party pooper, *but you might not want to tell everyone just exactly when it is that you're bringing Kitten home.* You and Kitten need and deserve a little time together to cement your own relationship before you're both bombarded with excited visitors. If you have children, start communicating about Kitten's needs now and set clear expectations for how things will unfold when Kitten comes home.

**Remember! Your only job for the next few days is to provide safety, security, nourishment, and love.** It's proven that cats form relationships and bond with their owners in a parent-child relationship. You have just assumed the role of Mama Cat, protector, and comforter. Behaving just like Mama Cat will help you earn your kitten's love and devotion; that means prioritizing Kitten's needs above those of eager family members or your own excitement to share your new bundle of joy.

**The first thing you want to do is place Kitten's carrier on the floor, where you will leave it for the next several weeks. Open the door, sit down, relax, and allow Kitten to venture out when they feel up to it.**

The carrier will be their safe space within their safe space; tucked away somewhere accessible but quiet for them to sleep and relax in whenever they feel the urge. Leave it here for at least two weeks, and preferably even longer. Allowing your kitten (and eventually cat) to rest in their carrier on their own terms removes the stigma of being "caged" and makes it so much easier for them to be taken to the vet!

**Once your kitten ventures out on their own terms, show them where food, water, and their litter box are located.** Give your kitten some time to get used to things at his/her own pace. Despite all the work we've done to socialize your baby, your kitten may cry or meow and seem frightened the first few days and nights. That is perfectly natural, in an entirely new place with new people, new smells, etc.

**During the first two to three days, you need to spend as much quiet and down time as possible in your kitten's safe space, building the bonds that will last their lifetime.** Remember! Your new kitten is still very, very much a baby, despite its size. Your baby will quickly come to see you as its loving parent whom it can implicitly trust to take cues from on who and what is safe (and what is not) and it will depend on you staying close by until it can build some confidence in its new home and with new people. As the week progresses, you can gradually increase the amount of time the kitten spends alone and with others.

## Introducing Kitten to Friends & Family Members

**On the third day after arriving in your home, you can start to introduce Kitten to other family members;** you just need to do so slowly and thoughtfully. You will need to be there and invite one to two new people into your kitten's safe room at a time to make introductions and help Kitten begin to bond with others.

- 1. The absolute best way to bond with a kitten is through playing.** When someone new meets Kitten for the first time, maintaining a safe distance and offering a favorite toy on a stick or throwing a crinkle ball sends all sorts of feel-good chemicals surging in your kitten's body and will help them quickly see the new person as a friend that shares their love for a favorite object. Five to ten minutes of playtime will be the start of a beautiful lasting relationship!!
- 2. After spending some time bonding through play, the next-best way to bond is by offering a very special treat,** like a [Churu lickable treat](#).
- 3. After the kitten is comfortable playing with and accepting a treat from someone, it is okay to begin to allow that person to approach, stroke, and cuddle your kitten.** Because cats are both hunter and prey, the person should approach Kitten slowly from the front of his/her face and stop an inch or two shy of making contact. Allow kitten to sniff and eventually move forward to touch the person's finger or hand with their face or body. For some kittens, this will take ten seconds. For others, it may take ten visits. Either way, allowing Kitten to control when and how the contact occurs ultimately results in a more trusting, outgoing cat.
- 4. Only after the Kitten is comfortable playing, eating, and initiating physical contact with someone should that person try picking the kitten up or carrying it around.** All great human-cat relationships are based on patience and moving at the speed the kitten or cat is comfortable. It's truly that simple!



## Introducing Kitten to Existing Household Pets

**Introductions to existing cats and dogs, etc. must be supervised and done slowly. Never attempt to introduce your new kitten to any existing household pets for at least seven days—no matter how chill your kitten might be and no matter how much you trust your existing pet(s).**

- **As soon as you take kitten home, begin the process of “scent swapping.”** This involves exchanging toys and blankets between the kitten’s safe room and the main areas of the house where your existing pet(s) live to allow all animals to become familiar with smell and presence of someone else in the house. When you introduce the kitten’s scent to your existing furbaby, be sure to give them a lot of love and praise. Do what you can to set them at ease and curb any jealousy over the new baby. Continue this process daily for at least a week or until it’s time to make face-to-face introductions.
- **Allow kitten and existing pets to sniff each other under the door when they become interested.** Don’t stress or make a big deal over this. If you get nervous or over excited, they will suspect something is wrong. Curiosity means good progress! Expect there may be a little whining, barking, or hissing at first, but it should become less and less each day. When pets on both sides can hang out close to the door without “reacting” – that’s a good sign that you are ready to progress to the next step.
- **When it is time, bring the kitten, in its carrier with the door closed, into a room where you and your existing pet spend time, together.** Don’t do anything to draw your existing pet’s attention to the kitten – don’t say or do anything out of the ordinary. Just place the kitten in the carrier close by you and sit down to relax. Allow your existing pet(s) to discover the kitten on their own time and to approach the carrier when they feel ready and to retreat when they are uncomfortable. The key here is to allow the animals to set the pace and for you to take your cues from them. If the introduction doesn’t go well, cut the visit short and return kitten to their safe space. If no one is getting too upset, you can allow this to go on for a half hour, and then try and repeat it again later in the day.
- **When your existing pet(s) and kitten can comfortably go nose to nose with kitten in the carrier, without anyone making a fuss or being hypervigilant, it is time to restrain your existing pet and**

**open the carrier door.** If your existing pet is or includes a dog, they should be on a leash under your control at this time. Allow kitten to exit the carrier at their own pace, and to retreat to the carrier as soon as they are ready. Again, never force an interaction or exert your will over the animals. They must build trust with one another on their own time and the only thing you can do to help that happen is to exude calm, quiet, reassuring energy and ensure the environment is safe so that no one gets hurt.

- **When you have been able to bring kitten in their carrier into the existing pet's space on multiple occasions over a period of 3-5 days, with the kitten exiting on their own and no one in the house overreacting, you can begin to allow the animals time together in this space off leash.** Of course, all of this is provided you have excellent verbal recall ability over your dog. If your dog is not 100% obedient to commands or tends to be overly excitable, you will need to extend this introduction period out to two to four weeks. A small, lightning-fast kitten resembles in many ways a rabbit, squirrel, or other prey that can stimulate a dog's natural herding or hunting reflexes, by no fault of their own.
- Do not bring your existing pets into the kitten's safe room – that needs to remain a place where kitten feels he/she can retreat without being bothered for the next few weeks.

## Raising and Caring for a Proper Housecat

Once your kitten is comfortable in your home, you can help them get started learning your household and family routines. Cats seem to thrive on consistency, so keeping your kitten's feeding, play, and sleeping routines consistent will be very calming and healthy for them.

### Maintain Good Litter Box Hygiene

When you bring Kitten home, it is very important to use the litter box and cat litter we provided, unless you have already purchased a Litter-Robot, which they are also accustomed to using in our home. This sense of continuity will ensure the good litterbox habits they developed with us continue in your home. We can't stress this enough. There is so much changing for your kitten! Let's keep the important things the same, please. And we all know that proper toileting is high on everyone's priority list! ☺ On that note, location matters! Place your kittens litter box in an open area that does not have a lot of traffic and use an oversized litter-trapping mat under the box to catch debris. If your kitten is afraid to walk past another cat or dog to get to the box, it is not going to use it. If your box is covered or hidden, your cat may not enter it.

After your kitten graduates from their safe space, you can begin to transition to a new box or litter type if you'd like. If you have a two-story home or a large home, you should place two litter boxes in different areas. Keep the type of litter you use consistent and, if you must change litters, do so gradually by mixing the old and the new together. Sometimes, if a cat doesn't recognize the smell (particularly of a perfumed litter), he or she will not eagerly use the litter box and begin to have accidents.

Also, and we can't stress this enough, keep the litter box clean! Scoop and top off litter daily, and dump the whole box and clean it weekly, at a minimum. Cats don't like climbing in a dirty box any more than you want to sit on a commode that hasn't been flushed. Cats have great hygiene, and they are very troubled by wet, clumpy, smelly litter. Nine out of 10 litter box bad habits come back to bad habits on the part of the owner. Plus, keeping up with the box a little at a time is so much easier, so NOT AS GROSS, as letting it get out of control and dreading the chore of facing what has happened over time.

### Maintain Healthy Eating Habits

Your kitten should have access to dry kibble and fresh water all the time and should be offered high-quality canned food once a day, at roughly the same time of day. **Dry food does get stale after a day or so and doesn't taste very good, so don't put out more than your cat can eat within that period (think of it**

like pretzels). Canned food spoils as quickly as our own food, so remove any food that isn't consumed within 30-45 minutes.

**Always feed your cat in the same place and use a placemat or rug under their dishes and fountain to protect the floor and prevent the bowls from sliding.** Never use plastic or silicone to feed cats. This material allows bacteria to build on the surface and is a common cause of feline chin acne and sores. Glass, ceramic, or stainless-steel bowls are best. Wash food bowls daily and clean water fountains twice a week, or more often if it is soiled with food or hair.

We have sent you home with enough dry Royal Canin kibble and kitten canned food for the first week at home. **It is critical to keep your kitten on the same [Royal Canin Mom & Baby Cat food](#) that they are used to eating for a few weeks after taking them home,** and then gradually switch them over to **Royal Canin Maine Coon Kitten.** I recommend purchasing one small bag of Royal Canin Mom & Baby Cat food and one bag of Royal Canin Maine Coon Kitten so you can mix them during the transition period. **Sudden changes in food will cause diarrhea and vomiting, so take it slow!**

***Note!** I have or will be sending you an email from Royal Canin with a coupon for 20% off your purchase and recommend using their auto-ship option for both convenience and savings!*

Your Maine Coon should remain on kitten formula until they are fifteen months old, at which time you will transition them to Royal Canin Maine Coon Adult. **Unless your cat develops some sort of food allergy or health condition, they can remain on Adult Maine Coon formula for the rest of their life.**

**\*\*Please note that we do not recommend or use any grain-free variety of food, as grain-free foods have been linked through studies to higher prevalence of feline heart disease. However, you should always follow the advice of your veterinarian or any veterinary sub-specialists to whom you are referred.**

### **Maintain a Healthy Coat**

Maine Coon cats are well known for having long, luscious, thick coats of hair. These beautiful coats require regular grooming, most of which will be done by your cat, but some of which will require your help. A healthy cat spends about one-third of its time when it is awake grooming itself. Both the teeth and claws are used in this process, so maintaining both of those in good shape is essential to ensure your cat feels good and is capable of properly maintaining its coat. **If a cat or kitten suddenly stops grooming**

itself, it is always a red flag that something is awry with their health and warrants a prompt visit to your veterinarian.

The three essential grooming items you should own are a stainless-steel butter comb ([we like this one from Chris Christensen](#)), a boars bristle brush (provided in your go-home bag) for daily brushing, and a [slicker brush](#) for weekly dematting.

- For the most part, a thorough weekly brushing, coupled with prompt attention to any tangles or knots that appear in between brushings, is enough to help your Maine Coon maintain their gorgeous looks.
- The comb is the very best tool for removing dried food, waste, and other gook that your cat will inevitably wear from time to time.
- The more often you brush, the less shedding you'll deal with. NEVER USE A DETANGLING BRUSH or any dematting brush with hooks as this will rip out the coat and leave your Maine Coon with a thin, awkward coat.

### **Bathing Your Maine Coon**

A bath with blowout every two months is a good idea to remove dead coat and excessive oils. If your cat has any white in its coat, we highly recommend using [Chris Christensen's White on White](#) shampoo. If you don't want to attempt this yourself, please find a professional groomer who has a lot of experience with long-haired cats at a cat-friendly grooming shop. A groomer who insists your cat needs to be sedated, bagged, or wear a head covering for grooming does not have the proper training in cat handling and is not recommended. Try to drop your cat off at the appointment time and pick them up as soon as they are finished to minimize their stress.

### **Maintain Healthy Claws & Scratching Behaviors**

Claws are important to help your Maine Coon groom itself and climb, both of which are part of their instinctive nature. In fact, the act of scratching is a form of greeting by cats and provides a source of physical and psychological comfort through its rhythmic action. In addition, scratching is a source of reassurance to your cat of its ability to defend itself or to choose not to defend itself, which can be witnessed by watching your Maine Coon contract its claws and "knead" you with contentment and trust.

**Trying to stop a cat from climbing or scratching is like trying to teach a fish not to swim.** *However, you can teach a cat the proper place to scratch*, which is something we work hard on training your kitten to do while they live with us. Redirecting inappropriate scratching to an approved location is something you need to start right away when you get home and continue to reinforce as kitten grows. Eventually, this will become a habit and very rarely will a cat deviate from the approved location. The best way to avoid furniture damage is to provide a tall vertical scratching post, like the [Midwest post we recommend](#), and something horizontal on the floor, like a [Turbo scratcher](#) or other cardboard scratching box. Having a few of these around the house in the rooms where your Maine Coon spends a lot of time is the key to success!

**Continuing the habit of trimming your kitten's front claws at home will help protect people and your belongings.** We provide a [pair of nail scissors](#) that are ideal until your kitten is about a year old. At that time, depending on your cat's claw shape and density, you may find you need to upgrade to a [larger clipper](#). Keep in mind that the living portion of the nail bed contains sensitive nerves and blood vessels. So, while we've done our best to get kitten used to the process of a nail trim, most cats are instinctively cautious about having their feet touched. Their reluctance is natural, but your persistence needs to be greater. Kitten's claws usually need trimming every one to two weeks. Adult cats only need to be trimmed every 2-4 weeks. It's a good idea to start trimming claws when your kitten is sleeping or resting. Before attempting to trim the nails, begin by touching its legs, feet, and toes. Provided kitten is still relaxed, grasp the paw firmly but not too tight. Even if your Maine Coon shows sign of withdrawing its paw, maintain your grasp and continue with the process, acting in a slow and calm manner to assure them that this interaction is not unpleasant and it is going to happen, even if it's under protest. If you give up every time they fight you, you will quickly reinforce the bad behavior and lose the war.

### **Maintain Healthy Boundaries and Proper Behavior**

As we would with human children, we need to realize the importance of establishing *realistic and healthy* boundaries for our Maine Coons. While we'd all love to live in a dream world where we always get our way and everyone else behaves according to our rules, life doesn't work like that. The key to living healthily and happily with your Maine Coon lies in not attempting to suppress your cat's natural and instinctive behaviors, but in guiding them in a way that is acceptable and ensures your cohabitation is a joy rather than a chore. This requires you to do a little extra work to see the world through the eyes of your cat, and not as you naturally see it as a human. Once you understand your Maine Coon's physical and

psychological needs, you can provide acceptable alternatives to meet those needs that do not result in any harm to humans or expensive belongings.

**Here are some basic things you must understand about how cats see, think, and operate in the world:**

- Cats are intelligent hunters with a need for frequent stimulation (provide plenty of toys)
- Cats are agile animals with an ingrained need to run and climb ([provide shelves or wall hammocks](#), cat trees, and perches)
- Cats have an intrinsic need to sharpen their claws and mark their territory in various ways (provide scratching posts and cardboard scratchers)
- Cats are nocturnal and able to see and navigate in extremely low light conditions (it's okay to leave them alone at night, they don't have to sleep in your room unless you want them there)
- Cats are obligate carnivores that live on protein (they do not need processed human foods)

**Examples of Destructive Behaviors that Need Not be Tolerated:**

- Biting and scratching people
- Urinating or defecating outside the litter box (except in the presence of a health issue)
- Going on nighttime rampages that disrupt your sleep
- Stealing food placed on counters or tables while you're cooking or dining
- Climbing the Christmas tree, clearing the mantle, or otherwise destroying expensive items

While it isn't easy or immediate, establishing boundaries and redirecting your cat's natural instincts to acceptable outlets can be done! Just as is the case with a human child, consistency is key! So now, let's tackle one of the most predictable undesirable behaviors you'll experience when Kitten comes home, and what to do (and not do) about it!

## **Managing Problem Behaviors**

### **Feline Playtime Aggression and How to Redirect**

When playing, all young animals imitate some form of adult behavior that will be useful for them as they grow up. With kittens, it is either hunting or fighting. These are necessary survival skills ingrained through thousands of years of genetic history. Playing "rough" is simply their way to practice hunting and fighting routines that nature intended them to use as adult cats. Clearly, there is nothing wrong with the aggressive play itself. The problem begins when the target is our delicate

human hands. The solution lies in redirecting the aggression to more suitable targets! Here are some suggestions.

### **Option 1: Redirect Playtime Aggression to a Toy**

A cat toy makes a perfect outlet for all that pent-up playful aggression, so always use toys to initiate interactive play sessions with your kitten. This is a great way to interact with your cat while keeping your hands out of reach! Use a variety of toys, whether store bought or homemade, but make sure that they create enough distance between your Maine Coon kitten and your hands. Rotate the toys and keep them out of reach when you are not playing with your kitten. This will keep them fresh and enticing when you do bring them out.

### **Option 2: Consider Adopting a Sibling or Adding a Furry Companion**

A sibling or another companion animal can make the perfect target, or rather a partner, for aggressive play. Protected by their furry coat, kittens seem to know their own boundaries and thresholds and there is usually no need to intervene in their aggressive play. Obviously, the decision to take in a second kitten is more complex than that. You are not getting a toy for your kitten, but rather committing yourself to taking care of another feline, for decades to come. However, if you can provide a home for another kitten, remember that in terms of kitten behavior, raising two kittens actually is easier than raising one! They keep each other occupied and make the best playmates for any kind of kitty play; aggressive types included.

### ***How to Safely Release Your Hands from a Kitten Attack***

Your fingers are tempting play “prey” to a vibrant kitten! Should you find your hand held tightly by teeth or claws, you need to know what to do and what NOT to do to safely extract yourself from the precarious situation. Most often, your Maine Coon kitten will not bite hard enough to penetrate the skin, but it can be frighteningly close to that point—particularly in situations where they are extremely excited and their instinctive hunter instincts kick in, signaling to their brains that they should hold tight and not let go of their coveted prize. Ouch.



**⚠ Things Not to Do:**

**1. When your kitten grips your hand with its teeth or claws, do not try to pull your hand away forcefully!**

The kitten's instinct is to tighten its hold when its prey (that's your hand) tries to escape, and trying to pull away will exacerbate the situation and cause you to end up with painful scratches and tooth marks.

**2. Refrain from yelling or raising your voice.** Yes, we know it is *your instinct*...however! Cats do not respond positively to loud noises, and at this point, they are already not thinking clearly. Raising your voice will only further aggravate the situation, causing them to become more aggressive due to fear. Further stimulating an over stimulated kitten is never a good idea!

**3. Never resort to physical punishment.**

Never hit your Maine Coon in this situation (or any other). Physical punishment will not only hurt your cat, but it will also breed mistrust and fear and damage your bond and relationship. This can result in your cat becoming more aggressive, potentially leading to a cycle of stress and fear for both you and your Maine Coon.

**👍 Things You Should Do:**

**1. Maintain a Relaxed Stance** - Keep the hand that's been captured by your kitten's teeth and claws relaxed. If you tense up, it may further provoke the cat's predatory instincts, making it harder for you to extricate yourself from the situation.

**2. Stay Calm & Non-confrontational** - Try to maintain a calm demeanor and avoid making direct eye contact with your kitten. In the feline world, direct eye contact can be perceived as a threat or challenge, which may escalate the situation.

**3. Provide Playful Diversions and Leverage Environmental Distractions** - Use your free hand to grab a toy or some other object to divert your cat's attention. Redirecting the cat's focus away from your hand and onto a less harmful object can help diffuse the situation. Make playful moves with the distraction you've chosen. This could potentially entice your cat to release your hand in favor of pursuing its "new prey." This tactic can turn a tense situation into a more playful interaction, helping the cat to redirect its energy in a positive manner. If you can't reach a suitable object, create a diversion with your free hand. Tap on a surface or make scratching noises on fabric – anything that will catch your cat's attention and make it lose interest in its "current prey" (your hand), focusing instead on the new attraction.

**4. Wait for Release and Withdraw Your Hand Safely** - Wait for your kitten to loosen its grip on your hand, or even better, to let go completely. Attempting to forcefully pull your hand away while the kitten still has a firm grip could lead to injuries. Once you're sure you can safely remove your hand, do so swiftly but gently, moving your hand out of the cat's immediate reach. Swift action can prevent them from re-establishing their grip, while a gentle movement will minimize the risk of provoking a fear response.

**5. Allow for a Cooling Off Period** - After such an incident, it's beneficial to take a break and give your kitten some space. This cooling-off period will allow both you and your kitten to calm down and reset before attempting to engage in play or other forms of interaction again.

**6. Be Consistent** - Keep in mind that this is a natural behavior for kittens and young cats. They are more than likely to outgrow this phase at some point. In the meantime, do not allow playful aggression in any form. Whenever your kitten directs her aggression towards you, be it your hands, ankles, or any other body part, use the method described above to break away.

**7. Do not allow aggressive play when your hands or feet are under the covers.** Remember to provide your kitten with alternatives—either by bringing in a second cat into your home, or by using cat toys. Yes, your skin is protected, but a surprise attack at 3AM when you're snug asleep in your bed is not any fun! Handle this correctly, without ever shouting at or punishing your cat and you should be able to make it through kittenhood with your skin intact. And yes, you can still pet your kitten! Just wait for the little critter to be sleepy and relaxed.

### **Jumping & Climbing on Off-Limit Spaces**

One of the most common questions we get is, "How do we keep *World's Cutest Maine Coon Kitten* from jumping or climbing on the [mantle, kitchen table, Christmas tree, etc., etc.]. Let us begin by saying that teaching your kitten what spaces are off limits *is very possible* provided you know how to choose your battles. As we've mentioned a few times now, cats' natural behavior and instincts compel them to jump and climb. In your home, your cat will often seek out high spaces to act on these instincts. Tall bookshelves will give them the best vantage point in the room. If other pets or small humans spend a lot of time on the floor, your Maine Coon may seek out your counters to avoid them when they've had enough. Like all cats, Maine Coons are also creatures of comfort and will enjoy all the best places as much or as more as you. After all, the life of leisure you've afforded them means they have plenty of free time to occupy those spaces when you don't. To be mentally healthy, your Maine Coon needs to be able to engage in these instinctive behaviors, in more places than not, on a regular basis. So, before the lessons

begin on how to teach them where they cannot go, make sure you have provided plenty of safe, fun, and accessible alternatives!

### **Boundaries You Can Defend**

- Kitchen counters and islands when food is being prepared, served, or enjoyed
- Dining room tables that are set for company or frequently in use
- Decorated mantles with breakable items
- Christmas trees and/or elaborate holiday decorations

### **Boundaries You Can Try to Defend, but May Lose**

- Kitchen counters and particularly islands, when you are not preparing or enjoying food
- Dining room tables that sit empty and are rarely used
- Bathroom countertops when you are getting ready and/or running water
- Tall bookcases and furniture, if accessible via nearby lower objects

### **Fights Not Worth Fighting:**

- **Your bed, your favorite cuddly blanket, a soft sofa or chair, and any kind of window seat.** These things are all cat magnets. If you can't handle a kitten or cat enjoying the finer things in your home, we need to be honest. A cat is not the right pet for you. And that's okay, we all have our priorities and have the right to live comfortably in our home, according to our own preferences. We would rather you be realistic with yourself and tell us now, before your kitten comes home, lest every man and beast in your home wind up miserable. Although Maine Coons are very intelligent and trainable, with dog like personalities, they are still cats and taking the cat out of them is not possible.
- **Any furniture placed close to a window or that receives concentrates daytime sunlight in your home.** A great example of this is our baby grand piano, a large, flat, black surface near a window that absorbs morning sunlight and makes a glorious place to bask to their inner lion(ess)'s heart's delight. Our solution was to invest \$300 in this high-quality, quilted, waterproof piano cover that protects our prized piano and allows us all to live in harmony. Life with cats and nice things is manageable, but you do have to be creative and plan ahead. If something is on your mind, let us know if we can help problem solve!
- **Any pile of clean or dirty laundry left unattended.** And the warmer it is, the faster you'll lose the fight. If you, your spouse, teenagers, or children are accustomed to throwing clean laundry somewhere in a pile, or leaving folded laundry out in a basket until the clothes are worn, it's time

to rethink those habits. If those habits are too hard to break, you'll either need to commit to keeping lint rollers at the ready or resign to the people in your house walking around being asked, "What kind of cat do you have?" 😊

### **Optimizing Your Home with Safe Maine Coon Approved Locations**

Before you ever bring your kitten home, go ahead and acquire a "cat tree" or cat condo (cat furniture) made for large, heavy indoor cats to scratch, climb, and explore. These items are things they have grown up accustomed to in our home and are essential to keep your Maine Coon stress-free and entertained. These "trees" often include platforms for your cat to rest on, along with interesting poles and columns to climb. They offer a human-approved way for your cat to get in high places. Placing these items near a window gives your cat a sunny spot to watch the world pass by and avoids a world of heartache and frustration for felines and humans, alike.

### **Use Environmental Deterrents**

Providing well-loved alternatives will help a lot, but it will not entirely prevent your kitten from attempting to get up on your counters and tables or stop them from trying to climb that very exciting holiday tree full of swirling, swinging objects. In these cases, you will need to add deterrents to off-limits areas to make them scary and unwelcoming for your Maine Coon.

Environmental deterrents are things that won't hurt your kitten, but that they really won't like. Things like aluminum pans that make unpleasant sounds or things with undesirable textures are a great way to drive your kitten away without hurting them and breaking down your trust. You can try methods like:

- Balancing cookie sheets on your counter so they make a scary noise when your cat jumps up
- Placing plastic carpet running "nubs-up" to make the counter surface unpleasant
- Hanging towels off the edge of your counters so your cat slides off if they try to jump up

And while most websites and cat experts will tell you to never raise your voice or use a spray bottle, we're going to keep it real and tell you that sometimes those things are necessary, they work, and they are far less cruel than allowing your cat to be burnt or otherwise injured, ingest something dangerous, or end up in a rehoming situation for someone else to try and deal with because their behavior can't be tolerated.

## Registering Kitten with TICA

Once Kitten is home, it's time to make things officially official and register them with TICA! The process of using the online TICA Feline Management System (TFMS) is not exactly intuitive, but their customer service is cheerfully available! If you get stuck, you can give them a call directly at (956) 428 – 8046. An actual human-being answers the phone, which is a nice plus. Just tell them you are a new pet owner that needs help registering your purebred cat online, using a breeder's slip. They'll get you to someone to help!

### What you'll need

- 15 minutes
- Your TICA Breeder Slip – in your go-home folder
- A valid email address
- A credit card or PayPal account to pay the \$10 fee

Once you have all of these, you can make the adoption official! It only takes about 15 minutes & \$10 to complete the process. You do not need to join TICA as an official voting member, but you do need to establish an account and be assigned a TICA Client ID.

1. In your web browser, navigate to: <https://tfms.tica.org/s/>. There are two buttons to choose from. If this is your first time registering a cat with TICA, then you haven't created a TFMS account, so click on **This is My First Time to TFMS**.
2. Next, you'll complete a couple of forms to let TICA know a little about who you are. Then, you'll receive an email to confirm your account (TICA wants to make sure bots aren't creating dummy accounts). Upon confirmation, you will create a password. Your username is the email you associated with TICA. Now, you have a TICA Client ID! Note: this does not make you a voting member, which is not necessary for the typical pet family.
3. Now you're at the Home Page where you will begin the process. Click on **Register a Cat**. Choose **REGISTER A CAT USING A BREEDER SLIP**. You can also watch the video on how to register a cat from a breeder slip. You can skip ahead to the portion applicable to the typical family bringing home a kitten which begins at 1:45.

## **New Kitten Care Instructions**

The important pieces of information you need from your Breeder Slip are the **Breeder Slip Number (BSN)** and the **Litter Number**. Enter this information in the form EXACTLY how it appears, including spaces.

Occasionally, you can follow all these instructions and there is still a problem. If you encounter error messages, call TICA first. The folks who answer the phone are accustomed to questions of all kinds and they will route you to the right person or they will be competent enough to help you solve the problem on the spot! Their number is (956) 428 – 8046. If they tell you we made a mistake, they are probably right. Just reach out and let us know. It's our job to fix any data entry mistakes we made!

### **Conclusion**

**Thank you again for the trust you've placed in us by joining the Maine Street Coons family.** Remember, your kitten is also our baby for life, and we are interested and invested in their well-being and your enjoyment of their companionship, for a lifetime! Lifetime breeder support is included in your adoption fee, so feel free to reach out via email, phone, or text at any time. We are always here to help! Our email is [kyra@mainestreetcoons.com](mailto:kyra@mainestreetcoons.com) and our number is (205) 529-3480. We want you to feel confident and enjoy a long and happy life together with your beautiful new baby. Congratulations on growing your family!