

Especially for their first 6 months of life, kittens are incredibly curious, they will put *anything* in their mouths. It is how they learn!

For their own safety, you need to completely kitten proof an area for them to live in. Whether you have to leave to go to work, the grocery store, or even if you are home but preoccupied doing other things - any time you cannot keep a direct eye on your kitten, they should be in their safe space until they are at least 6 months of age. Since we have them here until 12 weeks old / 3 months; you just need to keep a very close eye on them for those next 3 months they are at home with you.

When bringing home your new kitten, there are a few contractual requirements that we have.

1. Kitten must be isolated from all other pets for at least 7 days.
2. Kitten must be kept in kitten proofed spaces for at least 14 days.
3. Any time spent outside their kitten proofed spaces must be directly supervised for at least the first 60 days.

With our first litters, I was more relaxed with some of these requirements, which sadly lead to a few issues. Thankfully nothing major, but some of the issues we saw were:

- Unrestricted introductions and living immediately with other pets without being quarantined and introduced gradually lead to contamination illness, even if they got along fine personality wise.
- Kittens being unsupervised outside of their kitten proofed spaces lead to two separate cases of poisoning, as the main living spaces had not been fully kitten-proofed and the kittens managed to get into things they shouldn't have. I am now very careful to explain to each family why there is the importance of following these guidelines.

Letting kittens explore the whole house right away will over-stimulate them – they really need time to settle in, calm down, and then bond with you properly.

Cats and kittens naturally enjoy having a smaller territory they can 'rule' over. By

providing one or two consistent, safe spaces for them to spend their time in over the first few months together, you will really get to bond properly with your kitten, and you can rest easy knowing that they are safe whenever you cannot watch them.

When first leaving our home, and coming to yours, your kitten may be scared, or overly excited, or just awe-struck when entering a new space for the first time. You want them to get adjusted to their room, and be **comfortable** enough in it to relax and get bored!

You want to be the most exciting and best part of their world for those first few weeks. So when you're in the room with them, they are most interested in hanging out with **you and getting to know you**. And from there, **you** can then show them around the house once they're fully settled in and bonded with you.

We personally have 1 dedicated 'cat room' and then our bedroom totally 'kitten proofed' – so every cat we've had has gone through this process and it works really well, especially if introducing kitten to a bigger cat already in the household. The cats we have brought home and introduced to the group either spend their time in their kitten room – alone or with us ; and then time in our bedroom only when with us and supervised. **We always try to make sure that kitten has the option to sleep with us so we can bond with them too.**

If your bathroom is big enough, they can make great 'kitten rooms'. You need a space that is big enough for

- The food and water
- The litter box
- A cat bed / a cat tree (even a small one)
- You to sit down and hang out with them comfortably.

Letting kittens explore the whole house right away will make them way too over-stimulated – they really need time to bond with you properly.

They may be scared, or overly excited, or just awe-struck when entering a new space for the first time. You **want** them to get adjusted to their room, and be **comfortable** enough in it to relax and get bored!

You want to be the most exciting part of their world for those first few days. So when you're in the kitten room with them – or when you have them in your bedroom with you – they are most interested in hanging out with **you and getting to know you**. And from there, **you** can then show them around the house once they're fully settled in and bonded with you.

I can say that all of our kittens in this litter have turned out extremely affectionate and cuddly, but whether or not they keep those traits is up to you. **You really have to develop those habits those first few weeks with you so they keep them.**

Please sit with them and read a book or set up a tablet or laptop to watch TV, or a movie with them. Please hold them and wrap them up in a blanket- over and over, until they relax and hang out in your lap. Please feed them by hand, or at least feed them in your lap the first week as much as possible. Any chance you get, please sit with them, if you have kids, have your kids sit with them, hold them and kiss them and play with them in their kitten spaces as much as you can.

The first two weeks home with you are the most critical time for setting up the habits you want to keep with them. Just two weeks of your full attention, making as much time as possible for them, will pay off in years of affection and love.

So spend time with them in their kitten room, or in your bedroom, and have them on your lap **as much as possible**. **Hold them and hang out with them as much as you can – and after the first couple of days you can carry them around the house with you as much as you want. Have them on the couch with you watching TV – but only if they will stay in your lap or arms. Carry them to the bathroom while you brush your teeth or shower – have them in the kitchen**

while you're waiting for something to finish cooking, etc, keep them with you as much as you humanly can.

And then if and when you can't have them with you being supervised – they go in their kitten proofed room.

As days go by they will get bored with their room, and may cry and miss you – and THAT IS A GOOD THING! So when you are able to get them out, or go in there to sit with them, they will be **so** glad to see you. It's a very good process for bonding. Absence makes the heart grow fonder is a very real part of it lol!

I have a really close bond with each of my cats this way – and I really hope this can set you up to have close bonds with your kitten as well. 😊

Once that first week or two weeks is over and you've carried them around the house and shown them everything on your own time – you can then start to let them loose to explore on their own. By this point, any adult cats in the home should be used to their presence too – this would be a good time to let them meet if they haven't already.

(You'll know when you're bonded and when you trust them enough to let them out haha, but I really recommend at least waiting 5+ days before letting them out without holding them. Holding them and carrying them around while you show them the house really is a great way for them to learn that being held = going on a fun adventure and is a good thing!)

I really recommend keeping this space kitten proofed for at least their first 6 months at your home, even if they're fine being out and about / generally unsupervised while you're home. They can cause so much mayhem and damage when unsupervised if no one is there to stop them, they can also poison themselves by getting into things they shouldn't.

If you have to grocery shop, or go to work, etc, having a safe place for them to

spend that time is really priceless. You'll know when you can start trusting them home alone on their own – but generally kittens are pretty chaotic / unpredictable for those first 5 – 6 months.

The kitten room is also **really** helpful for time-outs! Cats are **are** very smart and **do** understand 'NO' way more than some homes give them credit for – a good 'time out' in the kitten room after being naughty very quickly teaches them that being out in the main house is a privilege; and helps prevent the horror stories you hear of tyrant kittens running a household and turning into little nightmare cats. I really haven't had to time out any of my cats more than 3 – 5 times as they grow up and get used to the household rules – I've only used it in situations where I've already told them ' NO ' a couple of times, removed them from the bad behavior to a positive one, and they still go back to the bad / dangerous behavior (like moving them away from a cord they want to chew on and showing them a toy they **can** play with, and then 2 seconds later they are back trying to chew on that cord... well then its time for a time out!)

So I really recommend using these next few weeks to kitten proof your bedroom and desired kitten area.

- Block off under any beds - there are plastic partitions you can get online, or you can use towels or cardboard if needed.
- Pick up / secure / zip-tie together/hide/remove any electronic cords! **No cords should be within kitten biting range!**
- Make sure there isn't enough room for them to squeeze under the door – in our older house that is an issue!
- Take down breakable knick-knacks
- Minimize climbing areas that are too high for them to jump from safely; add a cat tree or a "good" climbing area for them to focus on.

I've always been a huge advocate of setting animals up for success with the right training and behavior reinforcement! The 'Kitten Lady' on Youtube also has some great recommendations and videos on kitten behavior and socializing them.

Have guests come over to meet the little one, have a party or movie night for kitten to meet people and pass them around for kisses and cuddles and playtime, and have fun. The more you put into them, the more they give back. Just try to think like a mischievous kitten, and remove anything that looks especially dangerous or chewable. Just get thinking now about getting things kitten proofed, it's really so much better to be prepared before they come home so you can just focus on relaxing and bonding with your new baby!

Thank you for your time! I know this is a longer read, but I hope it's something you can save and come back to if needed while getting ready for your baby!

Please reach out to me if you have any other questions!