



# Setting Your New Cat Up for Success

**Congratulations on adopting your new cat!**

To ease the transition into their new home, consider the following:

## Supplies & Tasks Checklist

**Make sure you have the following essentials to make your cat feel right at home:**

- Food and water bowls
- Food (We encourage a slow transition to a new diet.)
- Treats for positive reinforcement training
- Bedding
- Toys: Provide a wide range of materials to meet your cat's different needs, such as comfort, interaction (wand toys are great for this) and enrichment. Monitor for preference and safety.
- Litter box
- Collar and ID tags (Don't forget to complete their microchip and license registration!)
- Cardboard and sisal scratching posts
- Grooming supplies: brush, nail clippers, etc.
- Explore pet insurance options
- Establish veterinary care
  - *It's important to find a veterinarian for your new pet ASAP to continue any necessary preventative care (e.g. vaccines, flea/tick prevention), review history and records and make a care plan for your new family member.*

## Time for Adjustment

Welcoming a new cat into your family is an exciting milestone, so it's tempting to want to show them off to the world. Every cat is different, but it generally takes a few weeks to a few months for them to decompress from their time in the shelter, acclimate to their new surroundings and establish a routine. Routine is very important for cats—establish a predictable routine, including play time with a wand or other interactive toy just before mealtimes.

## Creating a Safe Space

Walk through your home and pick up any items that might be harmful to your pet. Are there hair ties, ribbons and/or plastic bags your cat could accidentally ingest? Are there wires your new cat could chew? Are there any plants that are toxic to pets?

Visit <https://www.aspca.org/pet-care/animal-poison-control/toxic-and-non-toxic-plants> to learn more about plants that may be toxic to pets from our friends at the ASPCA.

Start your new cat in a small space like a bathroom where they can't hide under a bed or underneath furniture. Provide a litter box, food, water, a bed in a box and some toys in this space. You can visit them there as often as you like, but keep all other pets out until you're ready to introduce them. Slowly expand their territory as they become more comfortable.

Over time, gradually introduce your new cat to the rest of your home, allowing them to explore and adjust at their own pace. Provide a high perch, if possible, where they can observe and adjust while feeling secure. Observe their behavior and comfort level and provide positive reinforcement and rewards when they show confidence in new areas.

## Caring for Your Cat's Nails

Cats must keep their nails. To help maintain proper nail care, provide multiple outlets for them to scratch. Observe the cat to determine the type of scratching post they prefer. Not only does scratching file and condition their nails, but scratching is also a form of stress relief and stretching exercise for cats. Clipping their nails can help to reduce unwanted scratching. Use treats and a gradual process (just clip one or two nails at a time at first) to help them learn to be comfortable with having their nails trimmed.

## Introducing Your New Pet

Take your time introducing your new cat to other people and pets in your home. Allow them to acclimate at their own pace. Supervise all interactions until everyone is comfortable. Adult cats may take weeks to months to get comfortable with other pets in the home. Having a safe space to retreat is important.

At Seattle Humane, we are committed to finding the right match for both you and our animals. However, we understand that despite the best efforts and intentions, a pet may not be the right fit for your home or lifestyle. We encourage you to rehome on your own if you are comfortable, but we welcome any adopted pet back at any point in their life.

Visit [seattlehumane.org/intake](https://seattlehumane.org/intake) for tips on rehoming, or if you need to return the pet to our care, complete a Pet Surrender Questionnaire and our dedicated Intake team will assist you with the process. For after-hour emergency surrenders, please contact your local animal control agency.