

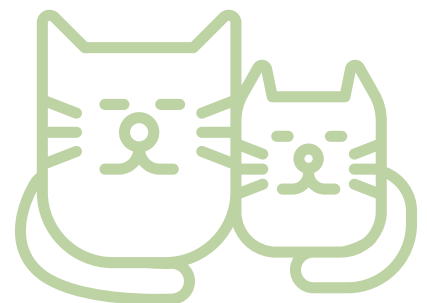


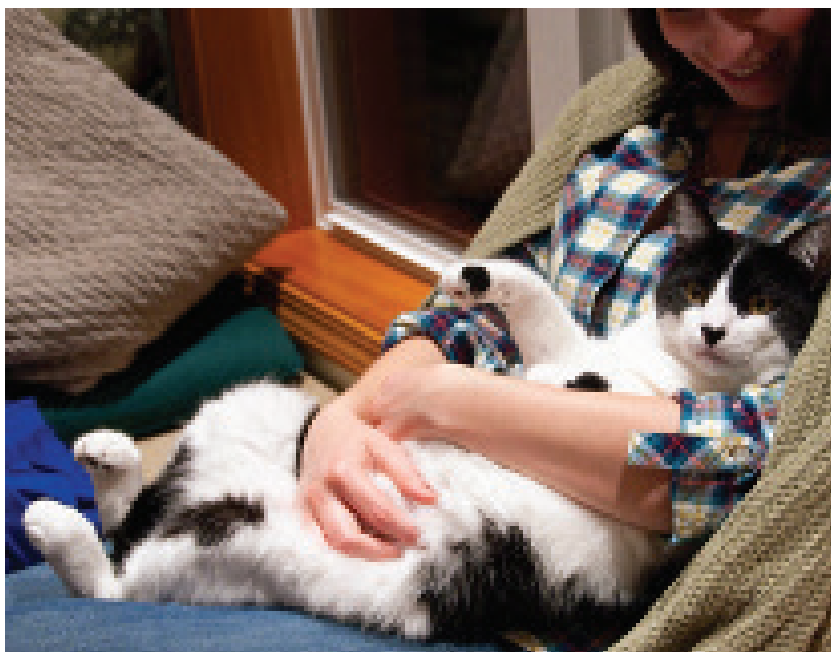
# Cat Owner's Manual

By Kasper Halevy, President and Founder of the  
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The Peninsula in Collaboration with Club Members

# Preface

Palo Alto Humane Society (PAHS) extends heartfelt thanks to Kasper Halevy for his hard work and dedication in researching and producing this manual. Kasper and the middle school Animal Advocacy Club at the International School of The Peninsula decided to produce two manuals of pet care that will be accessible to the local community through the International School of The Peninsula and to visitors to the Resources page of the PAHS website (<https://www.paloaltohumane.org/resources/>). The students elected to write about dog and cat care because they are the most popular pets among their friends and classmates; Kasper collated and organized the very useful and easily accessible information contained in the manual.





## Attitude Toward Cat Ownership

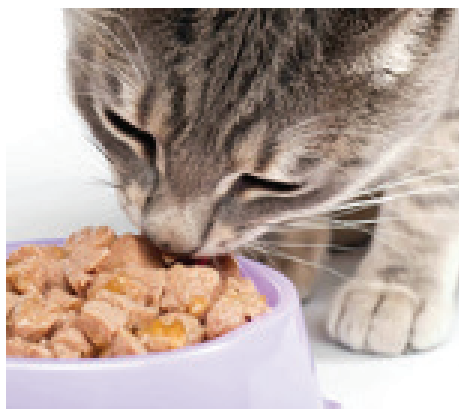
Before you embark on your journey toward having a cat companion, do not think of caring for a cat in terms of a chore. Make sure that you are prepared for a long-term commitment with some twists and turns along the way. Although cats are relatively easy to take care of, do not underestimate their needs! With a positive, patient, and loving attitude, taking care of your feline companion will go smoothly.

Cats are one of the most popular pets in the world, outranked only by fish. They are also among the more difficult to care for. There are so many different kinds of cats to choose from, each with different personalities and behaviors. Throughout this section, we will review the things you need to do in order to properly care for your cat.

## Food and Water

Like all living things, cats need food and water. The water part is fairly easy. Simply place filled water bowls in different parts of your home and make sure to wash and refill them on a daily basis. Feeding your cat is slightly more difficult.

Purchasing high-quality, brand-name kitten or cat food is highly recommended. Of course, always consult your veterinarian before deciding on what to feed your cat, as many factors such as health, activity level, age, and others will have an impact on determining the ideal diet for your cat. Treats should consist of less than 10% of the diet, as they are nothing more than candy for cats. Take your cat to your veterinarian if signs of anorexia (severe loss of appetite), diarrhea, vomiting, or lethargy persist for more than two days.



Many cat owners feed their cats human food, thinking that doing this is not harmful. While this may be true about certain human foods, below is a list of human food items that are poisonous for your cat (and all other pets, for that matter):

**Alcohol, Avocado, Chocolate, Coffee, Caffeine, Citrus, Coconut, Coconut Oil, Grapes, Raisins, Figs, Milk and Dairy Products (cats are lactose intolerant), Nuts, Onions, Garlic, Chives, Raw/Undercooked Meat and Eggs, Bones, Salt, Salty Snacks, Xylitol, and Yeast Dough.**

There very well might be other food items that are not on this list, so be sure to talk to your vet before feeding your cat any human food—you don't want to experiment on your cat! If you think your cat might have ingested any of the foods listed above, immediately contact an Animal Poison Control Center near you, as the consequences if your pet is untreated will be very severe.



## Space to Sleep

Cats need their own beds to sleep in. Although you could allow your cat to sleep in your bed, some cats prefer to have their own space. Even if your cat seems to prefer to sleep with you at night, still provide him with a cat bed. He might want to take midday naps or rest in his own bed after some exercise.

## Spaying and Neutering

Spaying or neutering is one of the most important things you must do for your cat. Spaying is removing a female's reproductive organs, and neutering is the same, but for males. The importance of this surgical procedure and reactions during post-surgery recovery are the focus of this section. Below is a list of reasons

why spaying or neutering is absolutely necessary for your cat.

**1. Overpopulation.** By not spaying and neutering your cat, you give him or her the potential to reproduce, which contributes to overpopulation. Did you know that if one female is left unspayed, she and her offspring can produce 70,000 kittens in six years? Many of these kittens have no homes to go to and end up in shelters where euthanasia rates are high. Some may not even make it into a shelter and will remain outside as a stray cat, which could be even worse! Just imagine if 70,000 humans were to show up in your city in search of housing. Competitiveness for housing will increase, resources could be depleted, and many of these people could end up impoverished. Surely contributing to such a terrible phenomenon would not be in your best interest, right?

A pair of unaltered cats and their litters can produce 70,000 cats in just 6 years.



**2. Increase in life expectancy.** Sterilized cats live from three to five years longer than intact cats.

**3. Decreased risk of developing certain cancers.** For males, the risk for testicular cancer is significantly reduced, as is that for prostate cancer. For females, certain types of cancers of

reproductive organs, such as uterine or mammary cancer, are almost entirely eliminated.

**4. Overall improvement in behavior.** One of the biggest differences between sterilized and unsterilized felines is that the unaltered ones have a desire to roam. Male cats will go to great lengths and travel long distances to reach a female who is in heat (the stage in a female cat's reproductive cycle in which she is ready for and is receptive to a male willing to mate). Normally calm cats will become accomplished escape artists. Yearning for a female can result in more aggressive and territorial behavior—thanks to the effect of the male hormone testosterone—including spraying to mark territory and other destructive acts. Female cats will yowl and often urinate inappropriately. Some studies suggest that the sterilization of cats has no effect on their behavior, and in some extraordinary instances even conclude that unsprayed females even suffer less from these behavioral issues. The full effect on behavior remains unclear. As of now, more evidence points to the benefits mentioned above. Even if those contradictory studies were correct, the real benefits of sterilization in general still outweigh the possibility that behavior won't change with spay or neuter.

**5. No Unwanted Pregnancies.** Having a pair of unsterilized cats and trying to prevent the creation of kittens is very hard. The female would need to wear a diaper or other protective device (imagine trying to put a diaper on a cat!), and the male would continue to pursue the female aggressively, creating difficult situations at home. Females can have kittens up to three times per year, and caring for kittens is extremely expensive and time-consuming. Such intensive care is certainly not what you signed up for if you chose to adopt only one or two cats.

**6. Avoiding Overcrowding in Shelters.** As already mentioned, kittens will end up in shelters and will take a space that could have been for another cat. When shelters become overcrowded, the oldest residents are, more often than not, euthanized to make space for others. One

unwanted kitten takes space from another unwanted kitten, a situation that frequently results in the euthanasia of both cats—a chain reaction that goes on with few exceptions in the form of adoption or rescue.

There are many reasons to support spay and neuter, but they're also some common excuses as to why spaying and neutering are unnecessary or "bad." Here is a table listing some of those excuses, with each excuse "debunked."

## Excuse/Debunked

My cat will become overweight.

*While it is true that some cats might gain weight after the surgery, with proper exercise routines and diets (there are pet food companies that specifically design post-spay/neuter foods), this risk will significantly decrease.*

My cat's personality will change.

*Your cat will certainly change after the surgery, but in a good way. Male cats will become less aggressive, and females will definitely enjoy not having to be in heat and going through the pregnancy process.*

My cat stays indoors so I am not worried about birth control.

*You never know when your cat might escape the house. Additionally, your cat will be eager to find a mate, and that may lead to naughty or aggressive behavior.*

It is not fair to deprive cats of their right to reproduce.

*By letting them reproduce, you also contribute to many kittens' fates in shelters, the streets, or even death (due to overpopulation). Plus, the other reasons to spay and neuter should override this excuse.*

Euthanizing cats is a humane way to control cat overpopulation, so why bother with spay/neuter? *This is simply wrong. Spaying and neutering allow your cat a happy and healthy life while*

*contributing to greatly reducing cat and kitten overpopulation. By that logic, you might euthanize a perfectly healthy cat because you did not bother with spaying and neutering.*

For other “lame” excuses not to spay/neuter, please visit: <https://www.catster.com/life-style/10-lame-excuses-not-having-cat-spayed-neutered>

Now that we know why it’s best to spay and neuter your cats, let’s take a look at what to expect post-surgery.

## Post-Spay

Spaying is a very invasive surgery, as it removes the female’s uterus, ovaries, and fallopian tubes, resulting in shock to your cat’s system. You can expect the recovery to take between seven and ten days (seek out veterinary advice). During that time, be sure to keep your cat’s activity levels as low as possible to prevent any complications with the incision. Keep an eye on her at all times and make sure she is contained in a safe area and not walking around on her own. A special collar or cone is mandatory so that your cat does not lick the incision, which could cause reopening of the wound and infection in addition to other possible complications. Finally, make sure there is absolutely no interaction between other animals and your cat!

## Post-Neuter

Neutering is a much less invasive surgery than is spaying, so the recovery time for your boy should be shorter. All precautions that must be taken for spaying must also be taken for neutering (protective cone or collar to prevent licking, supervision at all times, and so on).

To end this section, we will cover some of the signs post-surgery that indicate something is wrong and that requires immediate veterinary assistance. These are:

- Your cat has trouble breathing (a slight cough is normal, excessive coughing will require a vet visit).
- The incision reopens or becomes abnormally red or hot.
- The area around the incision swells significantly or begins to ooze out pus (again, mild swelling is normal).
- Your cat develops a fever.
- He or she refuses to eat or drink more than one day out from surgery.
- Your cat is vomiting or has diarrhea.
- Your cat stops excreting waste for a prolonged period of time (one day or more).



As always, consultation with a veterinarian regarding spaying and neutering and instructions for post-surgery care is necessary. However, doing some open-minded research into both sides of the spay-neuter debate is also helpful. Be sure that your veterinarian checks to determine if your cat is physically ready to be sterilized. **Never allow surgical procedures to be performed on your cat if he or she is ill.**

## Exercise and Mental Stimulation

### What Is the Difference Between Mental and Physical Stimulation?

Physical stimulation is quite straightforward—it’s exercise. However, when we think of mental stimulation for humans, we think of writing a huge presentation, coding, planning a large event, and other activities we humans do. Mental stimulation for cats, however, is much simpler.

A good example is having your cat follow a laser pointer. **CAUTION! If you do use a laser pointer, make sure that you do not shine the light in your cat's eyes because it could cause serious injury to his eyes.** Anything that relates to using their senses, exercising attentiveness, and paying attention to detail is considered mental stimulation. And for cats, mental stimulation and exercise can be combined into one activity, which you will soon see below.

Exercising cats? Yes, that's right! Cats are blessed with a fast metabolism that reduces a tendency toward obesity. Nevertheless, many indoor cats are overweight! In fact, obesity is a leading health problem in pet cats. Your cat's breed does not affect how much exercise he should be getting. Generally speaking, your cat should exercise 30 minutes a day. A kitten is usually naturally willing to exercise, but as your cat gets older, that natural instinct seems to fade away. Here is a list of ways that you can exercise your cat while giving him mental stimulation.

**1. Interactive toys.** This is the easiest way for your cat to get the exercise he needs. Toys like laser pointers, catnip-stuffed items (make sure your cat enjoys catnip, as not all cats are receptive to it), a furry object or a feather dangling from a stick or wand, a tunnel toy, and many more will have your cat running around, as well as stimulated mentally, actively using their senses! You can also use household items, but make sure they are safe (not sharp or pointed, can't come apart easily, and your cat can't swallow them). Remember, cats historically are hunting animals, so the best mental stimulation for them is to simulate hunting. **CAUTION!** do NOT use your hands and feet as their prey—most cats will attack you! Holding a wand under the carpet or a blanket and moving it around is a great way to simulate hunting. **Additionally, make sure you do not have any hazardous items lying around the house, like strips of plastic, needles, or electric wire.** Remember, cats are very athletic, so make sure you store any potentially dangerous items completely out of your cat's reach.



**2. A cat tree or scratching post.** This is one of a cat owner's must-haves. A scratching post with perches of different heights and locations will be very attractive to your cat, which will also induce some exercise by climbing and jumping between perches. The scratching post could also serve as a sleeping space! Pretty useful, right? And scratching posts are much better alternatives to (and cats like them more) than your furniture! You might also want to strategically place cat trees or similar safe perches around your home so your cat can jump from perch to perch.

**3. Building or buying a catio.** A catio is an enclosed outdoor space outside where your cat can experience the outdoors without being exposed to threats such as predators, pesticides, and cars. Your cat should be able to access the catio on her own—cats gain access to catios through open windows or cat doors. Furnish the catio with at least one cat tree, a few toys, and a litter box. Make sure that the access to the catio can be closed when necessary.

**4. Training your cat to walk on a leash.** Dogs aren't the only animals that can be trained to walk on a leash—cats can too! Of course, staying on a leash does not come naturally to cats, but training your cat to do this is definitely worth a try! If leash training is successful, taking your cat for a walk through safe areas in your neighborhood will make for great exercise with many things to explore (excellent mental stimulation!). Cats will enjoy their supervised time outside. Be sure your cat is comfortable with a harness before trying the leash, and remember to take it slow and praise your cat for complying (treats help too). **Always use**

**a harness, NEVER a collar, as pulling on a leash attached to a collar could seriously injure your cat.** Not all cats take to leash training, however. Remember there are other ways to make sure your cat gets sufficient exercise.

#### **5. Interacting with other cats or other animals.**

Pairing your feline with a playmate has a variety of benefits. First, the two animals will get plenty of exercise through playing with each other. Second, they will also be stimulated mentally, as they will try to compete, strategize, communicate, and give mutual care through grooming and cuddling. Third, all of these activities will definitely improve your cat's social skills. Fourth, when adopting kittens, it's highly advised to adopt kittens—they will become fast friends and forever playmates. Remember, if you decide to introduce a cat to another cat or another animal, check first with your veterinarian and get advice on best practices to introduce your cat to someone else. You can also consult these websites:

<https://www.animalwised.com/how-to-introduce-a-new-cat-to-another-cat-2480.html>

<https://www.americanhumane.org/fact-sheet/introducing-cats-to-cats/>

<https://www.humanesociety.org/resources/introducing-pets>



Having several playtime sessions with your cats every day is ideal, as many cats won't initiate these sessions on their own. Once you establish an exercise or play schedule, your cat might even ask you to play, instead of the other way around. However, do note that cats do not react the same way as dogs: When praising or caressing a cat, be more cautious and massage them gently—most cats love to be massaged near their ears and under their chin. They'll show their appreciation by purring and trying to rub against your hand and possibly lick you.



## Hygiene/Grooming

Your cat will need to be groomed, even though he licks his own fur to keep himself clean. Actually, there is much more to grooming than caring for your cat's fur. Grooming includes the following:

### Nail Trimming

Cats claws grow in sheaths or layers. Active cats need only to scratch at a good scratching post to shed the outermost layer to keep their claws healthy. Tools you can provide to keep claws healthy are scratching posts and scratching pads as well as cat beds with areas designed for your cat to scratch. Cats tend to prefer "sisal rope" scratchers, although corrugated cardboard pads sprinkled with catnip—if your cat likes catnip—are popular among cats (look at above photo for visual reference).

Claws should be trimmed when scratching a wound or a surgery incision might be dangerous for them, or when a cat cannot keep his claws healthy on his own.

**NEVER DECLAW!** This can cripple your cat and is illegal in many countries as well as recently outlawed as a form of animal cruelty in New York State. PAHS partners with The Paw Project. Check out their website to learn more about this issue: <https://pawproject.org/>.

It can be dangerous to trim cats' nails—because it's difficult to see the “quick” (major blood vessel) and hitting that could cause injury and profuse bleeding—and if your cat is “jumpy,” it's best to have them trimmed by a veterinary technician or even a vet.

The reasons to trim a cat or kitten's nails would be the following:

**1. Hindered ability to move.** Imagine having overgrown nails and having to walk. This would be miserable, and the same notion applies to your cat. Although your cat will find a way to adapt to their long nails, it will cause him to walk improperly, and that could lead to arthritis and other complications. Your cat's movements are painful because he has not been able to maintain his claws healthy, because of injury, lack of desirable places to scratch, or hindered movement. We sometimes find these situations among older cats (strays or ferals) who have spent their life outdoors.

**2. Ripped nail or nails.** As discussed above, having overgrown nails is extremely uncomfortable and can lead to many painful complications. One of them could be if your cat accidentally rips their nail. Ripping a nail exposes your cat's veins, arteries and internal layers of skin, and the cat could develop an infection. Ripped nails should be treated only by a veterinarian or a veterinary technician.

When necessary, get your cat's nails trimmed! Nail trimming on your own is very complicated,

so remember there are many professionals (such as veterinarians and veterinary technicians) who can help! However, if you would like to perform this task on your own, please visit <https://www.instructables.com/id/how-to-trim-your-cats-claws/>. Keep in mind that most cats are very particular about having their claws trimmed, and it is usually best to work with a professional.

An alternative to trimming your cat's nails is “soft claws.” You essentially glue some vinyl nail caps onto your cat's already existing nails. For more information on soft claws, please visit <https://www.softpaws.com/questions-and-answers-cat/>.



## Tooth-Brushing

Brushing your cat's teeth is absolutely necessary for his health, both dental and general. Historically, no one brushed their cats' teeth, even though cats developed dental disease, for which the only prior treatment was extraction. However, veterinarians now strongly advise that cat owners brush their cats' teeth to maintain strong teeth and gums and avoid dental disease and other problems such as heart disease related to dental problems. Here are three reasons why you should brush your cat's teeth as instructed by a veterinarian, usually one to three times a week:

**1. Eliminating bad breath.** Cats are notorious for having “tuna breath.” So, in order to ensure

that your kitty's breath does not put anyone off, brush his teeth.

**2. Preventing plaque and tartar buildup.** For those unfamiliar with these terms, plaque is a white and sticky substance that builds up over time on your cat's teeth. Tartar is a calcified deposit of chemicals that contribute to the rotting of teeth. Both are very detrimental to your cat's oral health and can, over time, result in other health issues (see 3 below).

**3. Protecting your cat's other body parts and organs.** Oftentimes, harmful particles in your cat's teeth will find their way into his bloodstream, which could lead to many diseases, including heart disease and other complications for your kitty. So please brush his teeth!



The reasons for brushing teeth are quite straightforward, performing the task is more difficult (the complete opposite of brushing your cat's fur, which you will read about later). Here is a mini-guide for successfully brushing your cat's teeth:

**Step 1: Find a good time to brush.** You would not want your cat to be energetic while you are attempting to brush his teeth. Before brushing teeth, a play session or some form of exercise to tire your cat out beforehand will calm him down and make the task of brushing easier. Be sure you have your supplies ready—cat toothbrush, cat toothpaste (absolutely no human toothpaste, as it contains xylitol, is poisonous to cats), and treats for reassurance later.

**Step 2: Positioning.** The ideal position for you is sitting down (anywhere as long as your cat be right next to you). Your cat can be sitting or lying down (face up).

**Step 3: Three Tests.** (1) *Gently* open your cat's mouth and rub your finger across his gums and teeth. This determines whether or not your cat will accept tooth brushing and how quickly you might be able to get him accustomed to tooth brushing. Seek veterinary assistance if your cat is too stubborn and refuses to allow you to brush his teeth. (2) *Test the toothpaste(s).* Because cat toothpaste is edible, you can simply give your cat a sample of some toothpaste flavors. Stick with the flavor he likes best. If you do not know how to determine which toothpaste your cat prefers, have your cat lick a small sample of one kind of toothpaste. Then, see if he does it again. If so, it means he likes it, and if not, he will most likely prefer another flavor. (3) *Test the toothbrush.* When you brush, be sure your cat is not wincing or showing signs of discomfort. If he does, be more gentle with your brushing. If you see light bleeding, it is not something to panic about, as it often is normal when you begin to brush. However, if you spot persistent and heavy bleeding, it means you are brushing too aggressively, or your cat could have dental disease (consult your veterinarian as always). Be sure that the bristles are pointing toward your cat's gum line for maximum cleansing.

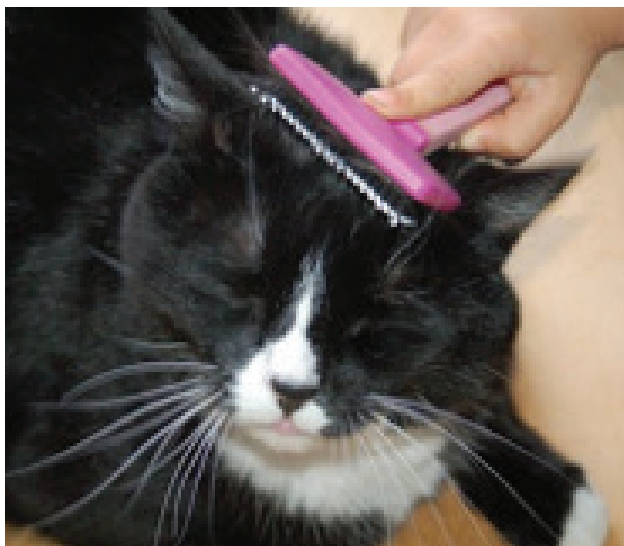
Last, but not least, after you finish brushing your cat's teeth, reward him with lots of praise and a few treats (not too many, though, as treats are essentially candy!).

## Haircuts

Are you kidding? Haircuts for cats? Surely that is unnecessary! For once, this assumption is correct! In fact, not only are haircuts unnecessary—but they are also detrimental to cats.

Let's begin with the three main reasons why you might want to give your cat a haircut. (1) *Your*

*cat has mats.* First, you can simply cut out the mats, not shave off your cat's entire coat. Second, you can prevent matting easily by brushing your cat regularly (which you will read about later). (2) *Your cat's coat is considered too long.* Again, brushing frequently will remove excess fur. In fact, a brushing session can be thought of as a mini-haircut! And as these mini-haircuts accumulate, they will equal one big haircut. (3) *You want your cat to look more aesthetically pleasing.* While we do not deny that trimming your cat's fur can produce aesthetically pleasing results (to humans), doing so is not pleasant for your cat, who is accustomed to his coat and would feel uncomfortable if it were cut or shaved off. Again, brushing will straighten fur, so as long as you brush your cat on a regular basis, haircuts should not be necessary.



A common excuse for giving cats a haircut is that they will benefit because they will be cooled off. However, not only is that not true, but also your cat's newly exposed skin could get sunburned. Despite cats having become pampered household pets, cats have not evolved to tolerate shaving their fur—that is highly detrimental to cats' health.

The only time you might have to provide your cat with regular trims is if he has abnormally long hair. However, that decision should be made by your veterinarian.

## Bathing

It's a generally accepted fact that cats take care of grooming their own fur. However, you might have to bathe your cat once in a while. Do not do this for fun or as a "bonding experience," as cats nearly universally despise having a bath. You should bathe your cat for two reasons only: (1) if he gets very dirty and smelly, or (2) if he needs to be given a bath for medical reasons (your vet will elaborate on the whys and hows if your cat needs a bath). If it becomes necessary to give your cat a bath, here are a few steps that will help you deal with your cat's almost inevitable dislike of baths:

1. Schedule the bath when your cat is in his calmest state. A play/exercise session will help tire out even the most energetic of cats.
2. For your own safety, we recommend trimming your cat's nails before the bathing session, preferably by a veterinary professional.
3. Brush your cat thoroughly to remove any loose fur and mats that could be a nuisance in the bathtub. Mats absorb soap residue and irritate your cat's skin.
4. Gently place some cotton in his ears to keep the water out (cats are very sensitive to having their ears wet).
5. Place a rubber bath mat in the sink (for smaller cats, of course) or tub where you'll be washing your cat so he doesn't slip. Fill the sink or tub with three to four inches of lukewarm water (hot water can burn your cat's skin).
6. Use a hand-held spray hose to thoroughly wet your cat, and do not spray directly in his ears, eyes, and nose. If you don't have a spray hose, a plastic pitcher or unbreakable cup works well.
7. Gently massage your cat with a solution of one part cat shampoo (human shampoo can dry out his skin) to five parts water, working from head to tail, in the direction of hair growth (the way you pet your cat so his fur becomes smooth, not spiked). Avoid his face, ears, and eyes.



8. Make sure you rinse off all of the shampoo. Any residue will irritate your cat's skin.
9. Use a soft washcloth to wipe your cat's face—make sure to be gentle!
10. Wrap your cat in a towel and dry him off in a warm place. If your cat can withstand the noise, you can use a blow dryer on the lowest heat setting. If your cat has long fur, you may need to untangle his fur with a brush (more information on brushes follows in the “brushing” section).
11. Reward your cat with a lot of praise and a few treats. Doing this should encourage him to be more receptive to taking a bath.

## Brushing

Cats also need to be brushed. Huh? Don't cats spend the majority of their time grooming themselves? Of course they do, but you can always help out! Cats often need some help from their humans to detect irregularities or injuries on their skin. Cats might never notice an injury located under their skin. In addition to helping cats by discovering injuries, the following are also important reasons why you should brush your cat frequently.

- 1. Brushing prevents mats.** For those who do not know this term, a mat is a large cluster of hair that is nearly impossible to untangle and needs to be cut out. What's the big deal? Mats can annoy your cat and cause infections and aid the spread of diseases. Mats can be prevented by regular brushing (4–5 times a week or once a day—to determine your cat's specific need, please consult your veterinarian).

- 2. Brushing mitigates shedding.** Brushing not only helps remove mats but it also removes much excess fur. If you don't brush your cat, all the excess fur will be shed onto the floor.

- 3. Brushing keeps your cat clean.** Brushing removes harmful particles from your cat's coat as well. Brushing your cat often will also cause you to become familiarized with the way your cat's coat looks so that if anything is wrong with it, you will spot that immediately when you brush.

- 4. Brushing helps you and your feline bond.** This is a great way to strengthen your connection with your feline companion. It should be a soothing massage for your cat (if you brush softly and correctly) that he will surely enjoy!

- 5. Brushing spreads natural oils throughout your cat's coat.** Natural oils are present in your cat's coat. However, without your help, they might not be distributed evenly. Brushing ensures this.

- 6. Brushing helps lessen hairballs.** Aren't hairballs the same as mats? Balls of hair? Hairballs form inside your cat's stomach and digestive system because as cats groom themselves they often ingest fur. Many cats suffer from pesky hairballs and cough them up frequently. Brushing reduces some of the hair on your cat and consequently helps lessen the frequency of hairballs.



Although brushing is one of the most important grooming tasks for you to perform, it is also among the easiest. Simply brush your cat all around (avoid his sensitive spots) in the same direction as his fur grows and be gentle and reassuring! Please consult your veterinarian regarding the best brush to get for your cat. This will differ for cats with different types of fur. However, we know is that **a human hairbrush will not work.**

For more information on which type of brush is best for your cat, please visit: <https://iheart-cats.com/grooming-101-what-type-of-brush-is-best-for-my-cat/>

## The Final Checklist

There is much information to digest regarding cat care. Some of that information consists of the items you need for your cat (mentioned throughout this booklet). To help you out, here is the final checklist for your cat (with a few unmentioned items too!):

- **Premium-brand cat food**—to make sure you are feeding your cat the best food possible.
- **Food and water bowls**, so you do not have to hand feed your kitty.
- **Interactive toys**, in order to mentally stimulate your cat and to serve as a form of exercise.
- **A brush**, so that you can brush your cat and reap all of the aforementioned benefits. (Remember, a human hairbrush is not advisable!)
- **A safety cat collar with an ID tag**, in case your kitty gets lost or displaced in a disaster or simply escapes from your home. Please also consider micro-chipping your cat. In short, micro-chipping is inserting a chip, typically between the shoulder blades, under your cat's skin. This chip can be read by a scanner and can help find the owner of the cat if the cat is ever lost. Please visit this link for more information about micro-chipping:

<https://www.pawboost.com/blog/2017-5-22-everything-you-need-to-know-about-pet-microchipping/>.

- **A scratching post or scratching pad**, to satisfy your cat's need to scratch and maintain healthy claws (and to avoid having your furniture scratched!) and serve as a form of exercise.
- **A litter box**—for more information regarding how to train your cat to use a litter box, please visit <https://www.hillspet.com/cat-care/training/how-to-litter-box-train-a-kitten>. (An adult cat will know how to use a litter box.) Make sure there is at least one litter box per cat in your household.
- **A cat carrier**, in case of emergency or for transportation purposes.
- **A cat bed or large enough box with a warm blanket or towel**, to provide a safe place for your cat to sleep (even though he might prefer sleeping with you!).

We've come to the end of our information about caring for cats. If you are considering adopting a cat, please ask yourself: ***Am I ready for one?*** And don't forget—be honest with yourself! Your cat's health and wellbeing depend on it.



## Bibliography—Sites to Consult

Welcome to the bibliography! If you have any lingering questions or would like to learn more, these are all of the websites referenced in the compilation of this manual (also includes websites that the images come from as well). Visiting some of them (and a veterinarian, of course) for additional information is always a good idea!

<https://www.aspc.org/pet-care/cat-care/general-cat-care>

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