

Cat Adoption Checklist

A cat adoption checklist guiding new owners through adopting a cat, from shelter visit to cat-proofing and first days home.

Before you adopt a cat

- ☐ Assess your space and whether your cat will be indoor or have safe access outside.
- ☐ Decide on an age and temperament that fits your lifestyle.
- ☐ Confirm housing rules, pet deposits, and any limits if you rent.
- ☐ Budget for food, litter, vet care, and supplies.
- ☐ Discuss responsibilities and a daily routine with your household.
- ☐ Consider how a cat will fit with children or existing pets.

Visiting the shelter or rescue

- ☐ Research reputable shelters, humane societies, and cat rescues.
- ☐ Confirm hours and whether you need an appointment.
Call ahead to be sure a cat is still available.
- ☐ Watch how cats respond to people and to gentle approach.
- ☐ Ask staff about each cat's history, health, and personality.
- ☐ Note which cats match your criteria for a follow-up meet.
- ☐ Be patient if the right cat is not there on your first visit.

Meeting and matching

- ☐ Sit calmly and let the cat approach you on its own terms.
- ☐ Watch body language for relaxation, fear, or overstimulation.
- ☐ Note whether the cat seeks attention or prefers space.
- ☐ Ask about litter habits and behavior with other animals.
- ☐ Introduce household members gently during the meet.
- ☐ Choose based on personality fit, not only looks.

Adoption paperwork and fees

- ☐ Confirm the adoption fee and what it includes.
- ☐ Collect vaccination, spay or neuter, and microchip records.
- ☐ Sign the adoption contract and keep your copy.
- ☐ Update the microchip registration to your details.
- ☐ Get the cat's current food and the litter type it knows.
- ☐ Ask about any recommended follow-up vet care.

Cat-proofing your home

- ☐ Remove toxic plants, foods, and household chemicals.
- ☐ Secure cords, blinds, and small swallowable objects.
- ☐ Close off unsafe gaps, balconies, and tilting windows.
- ☐ Set up a litter box in a quiet, low-traffic spot.
- ☐ Provide food, water, a bed, and a scratching post.
- ☐ Create a safe room where your cat can decompress at first.

First days home

- ☐ Start your cat in one quiet room before the whole house.
- ☐ Keep noise, visitors, and changes to a minimum.
- ☐ Show your cat the litter box, food, and water early.
- ☐ Let your cat explore at its own pace without forcing contact.
- ☐ Introduce existing pets slowly through scent and supervised meets.
- ☐ Important: This is general information, not veterinary advice. Schedule a checkup and consult a veterinarian about vaccinations, parasite prevention, and your cat's health.