

Acclimatizing your new fur baby to your home



Welcome home!

Congratulations. You are now a full-time parent to an amazing fur-baby! ...But what are the top things to do to make sure your newly arrived baby gets accustomed to you, your family and your home? Here are the top things to consider:

Getting accustomed to your home

Shy or uncomfortable at first?

It's the definition of normal. If you've moved into different houses yourself at some point in your life, you know what we mean. It's never easy to get accustomed to a new home and especially since cats have a sharp sense of smell, vision and sound, it makes it even more difficult for them. But, luckily we have some magic tricks which work so well your cat will thank you with snuggles and kisses *hopefully*.

FELIWAY CLASSIC or FELIWAY FRIENDS

Feliway diffusers were created for offering comfort at home to cats, and helping with preventing against spraying, scratching or hiding. You can order them online at bol.com, zooplus.nl and many other pet shops. Feliway friends is geared at multi-cat families.

CATNIP SPRAY

Use catnip spray for giving your cat an easy way out. Cats love this spray and they often roll around and rub against whatever surface has the catnip on it. The effect usually lasts for about 15 minutes and afterward, they may feel more mellow and content. Keep in mind that every cat is different, though!



Here is the sample picture of Feliway. If you decide to use it, make sure to have it plugged in 2-3 days before the cat arrives. It takes a few days for it to start working.



Spray this type of catnip on their scratching pole, favorite toys and favorite blanket /sleeping basket. It will make the cat much more comfortable in their new home.

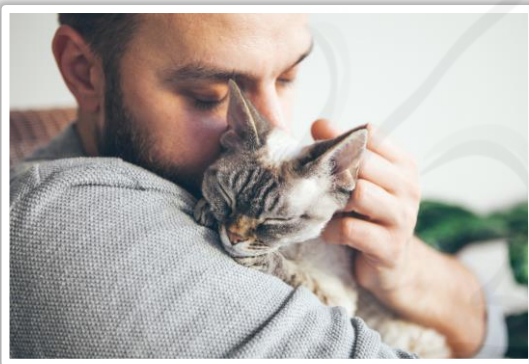
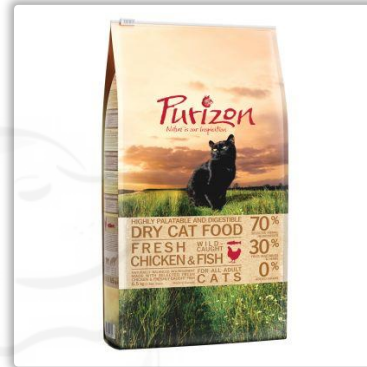


Cat litter types to consider

Want our opinion about what the best cat litter is for your cat? From what we've tried, we would highly recommend [Silica Cat Litter](#) or [Wood Cat litter](#) – these two tend to last for longer and don't have a strong odor. There's also [Biokat's Diamond care](#) which works great as well! Try them out yourself and let us know!

Best cat food for your fur baby

Litter solved, so let's now focus on the food. It is very important that your cat receives the right types of nutrients so that they can be joyful, playful and healthy. Here is a [list with the best cat foods](#) out there and it includes brands such as Purizon, Feringa, Farmina and Thrive (more examples also on the pages below).



....Other things to consider

Catproofing your garden or balcony (if you have one) is equally important as you don't want your baby to escape. There are many ways to do this and here is a [website with tips \(including photos\)](#). And here is the [direct link](#) to a good quality catproofing garden safety net.

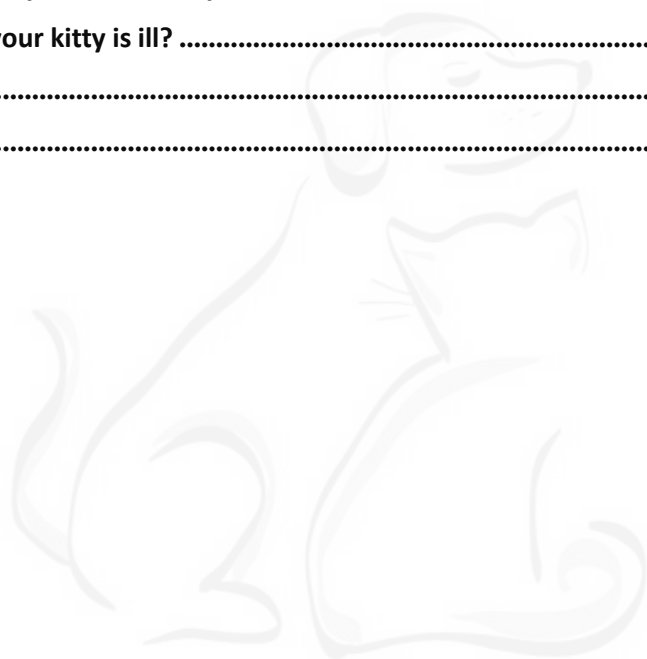
...enjoy your time together!

You're now set for a successful cat-hooman friendship! Enjoy it, it might be the best decision you've made!!!



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RESCUE DOGS AND CATS
The Netherlands



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After Adoption Guide: Chip Number, First Vet Check and Nutrition

Chip Number (Please read!)

As soon as your adopted cat arrives to the Netherlands, please register their chip number under your name. This can be done on De Stichting Nederlandse Databank Gezelschapsdieren (NDG) website: <https://ndg.nl>

Vet Check (Please read!)

When a cat is adopted from the shelter, they have been vaccinated, neutered/castrated (if old enough) and microchipped. The shelters work hard to make adopting a cat as easy as possible and to ensure the cat's health. However, it is still **very important to follow up with your veterinarian soon after adoption.**

During the exam, it is very important that your veterinarian reviews if your cat will need additional **vaccinations** to stay up to date. In short, a complete exam is crucial to ensure your new companion is happy and healthy!

Cat Safety (Please read)

Here are some tips that you should follow in regards to the safety of your new cat for the first few days/weeks after their arrival, especially until they get used to their new home.

- Please keep the windows and doors closed as much as possible to avoid that the cat escapes and/or hurts themselves. Tilting windows while you have a new cat is not a good idea as it can be dangerous for them.
- If you have plants in your home, you have to check whether these are safe for them, as a lot of plants usually turn out to be poisonous for cats. See here a list of plants that you should keep away from your cat: <https://www.petmd.com/cat/emergency/poisoning-toxicity/e ct poisonous plants>
- Take away small items from the room you are initially keeping them in, such as things they could play with and then swallow them (like small metals or small pieces of wood, etc).
- Hide any cords, plastic bags and watch out with curtains in the beginning.

Nutrition

Nutrition is vital for the health and wellbeing of your cat. It really is the foundation of everything; using good quality food will not only ensure you have a beautiful cat with a wonderful coat, but also a healthy pet.

- We recommend free-feeding dry food and offering measured portions of wet food. Free feeding means that you can leave the dry food out the entire time and the cat can eat when they are hungry (**only works if your cat doesn't overeat!**). Wet food should be fed twice a day, generally in the morning and evening, and the size of the portion should be based on the packaging information - it's usually 3-4 teaspoons per serving.
- If your cat is an aggressive eater, we recommend feeding the dry food in portions as well, to avoid the cat swallowing the food without chewing, which leads to vomiting. We know feeding portions at specific times of the day is not easy, especially if you work a 9 to 5 job. A tip we have is: **USE AN AUTOMATIC FEEDER, such as [this one](#)**. It will save you time and effort and it will ensure your cat gets the right amount of food at the right times of the day.

We have compiled an extensive list of wet and dry foods you can use, as seen below. Most of these brands can be bought from [Zooplus.nl](https://www.zooplus.nl), [Bitiba.nl](https://www.bitiba.nl) or from other pet stores, such as Pets Place.

Wet foods

(This is all complete food, so it can be given in combination with dry food, or by itself if you prefer to feed the cat a completely wet diet)

- Animonda Carny
- Feringa
- MAC's
- Applaws
- Catz Finefood
- Porta 21
- Power of Nature
- Real Nature

Dry foods

- Applaws
- Power of Nature
- Acana
- Canagan
- Carnilove
- Celtic Connection
- Orijen
- Purizon
- Wellness Core
- Wildcat

Snacks

- COSMA Snackies
- Applaws Loins
- Wild Freedom Freeze dried Snacks

Switching Schedule

For logistical reasons, we usually do not send shelter food with the cats (except if your cat is particularly sensitive or needs special food), but we will gladly ask the shelter what kind of food - wet, dry, brand - they feed at the moment of your cat's adoption, so you can try to feed similar kinds of food in the first days. After that, and especially with drastic changes, for example from dry food only to wet food only, we suggest the following switching schedule to help your cat's digestion get used to the new food.

The standard schedule we propose is:

Step 1: 3 days - 75% old food, 25% new food

Step 2: 3 days - 50 % old food, 50% new food

Step 3: 3 days 25% old food, 75% new food

The schedule can be extended based on each individual situation. If your cat is more sensitive, or has had issues with switching in the past, please take into account at least one week for each step. It is normal for your cat to have diarrhea when you switch food, especially if you switch to a lower-quality food. If you notice diarrhea, please increase the period by a few days. To help with diarrhea, you can add a bit of boiled rice to the wet food (no spices whatsoever, just plain boiled rice) or you can purchase probiotics from your vet. If the diarrhea persists, ALWAYS check with your vet. The cause could also be different than the food switch.

Tips for the First 30 Days of Cat Adoption

“Be prepared” should be your mantra when bringing a new pet into your home. Cats are particularly sensitive to new surroundings and some may hide under a bed or in a closet for days or even weeks. You can avoid pitfalls with your new critter and help them adapt more easily by following these guidelines:

- **Before You Bring Your Cat Home**

Cats are territorial, and coming into a new home leaves them feeling really uneasy. There’s all that unexplored space, and who knows what may lurk there.

Here’s a few things you can do to ease things up for them:

- Provide a small area to call their own for the first few days or weeks. A bathroom or laundry room works well. Furnish the room with cat amenities, such as food, water and a litter box. You’ll want to spend time with your cat, so make sure there’s a comfortable place for you to sit as well.
- Fill a litter box with one or two inches of litter and place it in their room where they can use it undisturbed. Set up a feeding station with food and water bowls. Locate it away from the litter box.
- Provide a small space for them to get away – like a cat bed/box, or the carrier they arrived in.

- **Cat claws and how to keep your furniture safe. Should you declaw your cat?**

Your cat will need to wear down their claws, and they do that by scratching on things (**scratch poles** are ideal, otherwise they might scratch on your couch/chairs, so we advise that you get a scratching pole in order to avoid that). Please never declaw your cat, as it is extremely painful for them. However, you can provide good scratching poles as mentioned and cut the tip of their nails if you want (**ONLY** the white sharp tip)!

○ **The First Day**

- Try to bring them home in a cat carrier, it feels safer. They have seen a lot of excitement, so take them directly to their new room. (Make sure the toilet lid is down, if they're supposed to acclimate in your bathroom.) Ideally, you would restrict them from exposure to the whole family, but naturally, everyone is going to want to see them. Remind them of the ground rules you've set up.
- Sit on the floor and let them come to you. Don't force them. Just let them get acquainted on their own time. If they don't approach, leave them alone and try again later. Some cats are particularly frightened, and yours may retreat to their hidey hole and not come out when you're around at all. They may only come out at night when the house is quiet. Give them time.

Your newly adopted cat may not eat much or at all at first. It's best to give your cat the same food they had at the shelter or in the foster home, at least at first. Keeping some things familiar will make them feel more secure. Be sure to change their water frequently and make sure that the cat is drinking. If your cat hasn't eaten for a few days, call your vet to ask for advice.

○ **The Following Weeks**

It may take your cat a week or two to adjust. Be patient.

Within a week of being adopted, take your newly adopted cat for their first wellness visit with a veterinarian. If you have a record of immunizations from the shelter, take it with you. Usually, you can find all this information in the cat's passport. As your cat adjusts, they'll show signs that they want to explore outside their safe haven. Make sure other pets or family members won't startle them while they gradually expand their territory. They may be ready to play, so you can add in some toys. Many cats like feather wands from the pet supply store, but homemade toys are often favored. A wad of tissue paper to bat around or a paper bag to hide in can be fun (just make sure to cut off the handles as they could be dangerous for the cat).

How do I introduce my new cat to my old cat?

○ **Go slow with cats!**

When bringing a new cat home to meet your resident cat, it's never a good idea to just throw them into a room together. That can be scary for both of them and create trauma that's hard to overcome! Go slow and introduce them. For both animals this can be a stressful time. A gradual introduction process is important for them to build a friendship. If one cat gets hissed at or swatted, they may always be afraid of the other cat.

Step 1: Before you take your new cat home

Set aside one room for your new cat away from the resident cat's favourite place. Have at least one comfortable sleeping area, one hiding area such as their carrier box, crate or a "tent bed", a litter box, a water bowl and a food bowl.

Step 2: Bringing your new cat home

Cats feel safe when surrounded by their own scent. Place a towel or bedding they have been sleeping on in the carrier box so that they have a familiar scent during the trip. Once home, take your cat to their room right away. Do not come into contact with the resident cat. Keep them inside the carrier box until you are in their room with the door shut. Place their box or other hiding area in a corner of the room (away from the litter box) and place the carrier box beside it. Open the door. Do not force them to come out. They may be scared and stressed by the new environment. Leave them alone in the room. Allow them to calm down, settle in, and come out on their own.

Step 3: Later that day swap cats scent

Cats communicate visually but also by scent. So you must start by introducing the cats to each other by “swapping” scent.

- Place your new cat’s towel on or near your resident cat’s favourite place and encourage them to approach.
- If your cat starts to hiss, spit or avoid the towel, place it on the floor away from their bed or food bowl. Each day move the towel closer to the cat’s food bowl.
- Do the same thing with your resident cat’s bedding giving it to the new cat for them to smell.
- Swap food bowls between the cats. They will start to associate the positive act of eating with the scent of the other cat. If one of the cats is sick or on a special diet, ask your vet before trying this.
- Once they are completely tolerant of each other’s scents proceed to visual contact.

How long will it take for cats to like each other’s scent?

This can vary from a few hours (usually when one is a kitten or both are social cats) to a few months.

Important tip when introducing cats

Set aside special play and petting time each day. You want to have one on one time with each cat when your introduction is taking longer.

Step 4: Controlled cat meetings:

First – Visual contact between cats

1. Separate physically with screen door or baby gate. If not possible then open the new cat’s door slightly so the cats can see each other but cannot fit through the door.
2. Give both cats treats so they spend time close to each other or play with a feather to encourage play. This will help them learn that the other cat doesn’t pose a threat. Do not use catnip.

3. When comfortable with each other they will sniff noses, play through the door or rub against the door. When you see this, you can have a proper introduction. There should be no growling, or repeated spitting or hissing.

Second – No barrier between cats

1. Open the door and let them explore.
2. If they fight, interrupt them by clapping your hands or with another noise that doesn't scare them.
3. Don't pick them up or force them to interact.
4. Let them distance themselves from each other if that's what they want.

What if my cats are showing aggression towards each other?

Is the aggression more severe than a hiss or a quick swat? - Make the opening smaller and over the next few days, feed the cats closer and closer to the door.

Do they each need their own litter box?

Give each cat his or her own litter box and add an extra one. They should have their own bowls, beds and hiding places unless they choose to share.

Expectation - Introductions, when done properly, can take more time than expected. Introductions and building a relationship for some cats may take a few hours or up to a few months. Your cats may play and groom each other or just sit and watch each other. Don't force them to be what you think best buddies should act like.

Caution when introducing cats

Watch for bullying, sometimes one cat will not let the other one through a door, or have access to the food bowl or litter box. You may see them swatting or hissing when the other cat tries to go to the food bowl. Watch for signs one cat is avoiding areas. If you think they're being bullied make sure they have their own space and things like bed, litter box, food bowl.

Never punish either cat if they show aggression. If you see signs of aggression go back a few steps. Scent swap for a few days and start visual contact again slowly.

How do you know your kitty is ill?

Humans (children) are generally very good at expressing even the smallest of discomfort. Cats are the opposite though, they will possibly miauw more than normal when in pain or need but this is no guarantee.

The best way to know if your cat is ill or uncomfortable or stressed is to know what their 'normal' is. This is of course very different per kitty. Here are some things that most healthy kitties do:

- Play every day, usually at certain times of the day
- Sleep a lot, again usually at certain times of the day

- Eat & Drink their water, this can be at random times and after play time
- Ask for petting, cuddles and attention
- Keeping some form of daily routine of the above



If your cat starts hiding when they normally don't, the water bowl appears more full than normal, food is ignored or a sudden hiss comes your way when your cat normally never hisses, it's likely they are suffering from some illness or stress factor.

Stress Factors? New humans, new pets or sometimes a neighbour cat on a balcony next door can all cause stress. Spayed cats are less bothered by another male or female presence though.

Questions?

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact us anytime. That's what we're here for!

Note from Rescue Dogs and Cats, The Netherlands – this document has been prepared using the information available on the internet and our own experience with cats that we have helped to adopt and rehome.

References

Tips for the First 30 Days of Cat Adoption

<https://www.petfinder.com/cats/bringing-a-cat-home/tips-for-first-30-days-cat/?fbclid=IwAR0DT6MquJkkmBTNozgdy9OsuFubUMz3s1Q12abibTDUoGXi2IlqT2eegbc>

How do I introduce my new cat to my old cat?

<https://spca.bc.ca/faqs/%E2%80%8Bhow-introduce-new-cat-old-cat/>