No Kill Glynn County, Inc.

Congratulations on Adopting a New Cat and Saving a Life!

Thank you for choosing to adopt a new cat. We want this to be a positive experience so that you and your new cat can live happily together for a long time. Here are some tips for starting your new relationship.

First Day Home

You have just committed to adding a new member to your family. This can be enjoyable but also stressful for all involved, including your new cat. When bringing your cat home for the first time, keep in mind that he has probably been through a lot in the last few days of weeks. He may have been lost on the streets for a period of time before coming to the shelter or been given up by his previous owner. Being adopted into a new family can initially be very overwhelming for a cat.

Your first day with your new cat should be spent allowing him to get used to his new home. Establishing a sanctuary room for your cat will help him adjust well. Cats are territorial animals and do best if they are introduced to one small part of a new home at a time. Pick a quiet room where your new cat can stay until he has adjusted.

Some Supplies Your Cat Will Need

- **Food:** Regardless of which brand of food you decide to provide, your new cat may experience digestive issues early on. Since it is likely that your new cat will be eating a food different than what was offered in the shelter, your cat's digestive system may need some time to adjust. Remember: if you are concerned about anything you are observing, please schedule an appointment to have a veterinarian examine the cat.
- **Water:** All cats always need fresh water available. Some cats prefer cat water fountains, which are available at retail pet stores and online. Using a water fountain can encourage your cat to drink more and promote proper hydration.
- **Litter box, Litter, and a Scooper:** This is one of the most important acquisitions when adopting your cat as this is where your new cat will urinate and defecate. We recommend getting two litter boxes for your first cat and an additional litter box for every other cat in your home – so, if you have two cats, for example, you will have three litter boxes placed in different areas of your home.
  There are many types of litter boxes available. We recommend choosing a litter box big enough for your whole cat to fit inside and turn around in, with sides high enough so that nothing is hanging out over the edge. Make sure to get a scooper as well and scoop at least daily! Everyone likes a clean toilet.
- **Scratcher:** Scratching is a natural behavior that all cats exhibit, and scratchers are important outlets for your cat, so you will not have inappropriate scratching on walls or furniture. Some cats like horizontal scratchers and some prefer the vertical variety. **Declawing is not something condoned by No Kill Glynn County**, and it is a permanent physical alteration of the cat that can lead to other behavior issues. Please contact your veterinarian if you need help with inappropriate scratching. There are many ways to redirect and manage this natural behavior.
- **Cat Tower:** Cat towers are like scratchers in that there is a wide variety out there to choose from and some cats have clear preferences. Cat towers also provide your cat with more space and territory to run around on. This is especially important, especially in multi-cat homes.
- **Toys:** All cats love toys! There is a huge variety of toys available, ranging from homemade entertainments like crumpled up paper and empty boxes to deluxe toys from pet stores. A good way to keep things fresh is to group your cat's toys into several collections and offer your cat a different selection every week or two. Most cats really enjoy wands with toys on the end of a string. Playing with your cat using these interactive toys can help you form a lasting bond with him/her.

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During the Weeks to Come

Everything he encounters will be new and possible stressful for him, so it is important to allow your new cat to adjust at his own pace. It could take three days for him to be his normal self, or it could take three weeks or three months – every cat is different. A good indication that your cat has adjusted to his new home is when he is eating, drinking, and using the litter box normally. Remember to practice patience, time, and love as your new cat adjusts! If your cat is not adjusting, seek advice from your veterinarian.

Introductions

If you have other pets at home, take your time introducing your new cat to them. Rushing through an introduction can cause long lasting conflicts between your new cat and your current pets.

- **Swap Scents**
  Switch sleeping blankets or beds between your new cat and your resident animals, so they have a chance to become accustomed to each other's scent. Rub a towel on one animal and put it underneath the food dish of another animal. You should do this with each animal in the house.
- **Switch Living Areas**
  After your new cat is using her litter box and eating regularly while confined, let her have free time in the house while confining your other animals to the new cat's room. This switch provides another way for the animals to experience each other's scents without a face-to-face meeting. It also allows the newcomer to become familiar with her new surroundings without being frightened by other animals.
- **Contact Stage**
  Do short, supervised meetings, then increase the time based off behavior.
- **Avoid Fearful and Aggressive Meetings**
  Avoid any interactions between your pets that result in either fearful or aggressive behavior. If these responses are allowed to become a habit, they can be difficult to change. Its better to introduce your pets to each other gradually so that neither animal becomes afraid of aggressive. You can expect mild forms of these behaviors, but do not give them the opportunity to intensify. If either animal becomes fearful or aggressive, separate them, and start over with the introduction process in a series of small, gradual steps, as outlined above.

Training

Training should begin early, no matter how old your new cat is. Socializing kittens is crucial to their development and will help you have a well-rounded adult cat. Talking to, touching, and playing with your cat all lead to a more socialized pet. For all cats, we recommend training. Training is a great form of positive reinforcement that can help teach a cat manners, help a fearful cat become more confident, or relieve a cat's stress. Your veterinarian can help with this.

Veterinarian Recommendations:

Coastal Cat Clinic	**The Pet Doctor**	**SEGA Vet Clinic**	**Coastal Home Veterinary Services**
Dr. Lisa Ryan	Dr. Nicola Overman	Dr. Shireen Hamid	Dr. Cherie Hodges
912-634-2119	912-222-9519	912-554-8388	912.850.4660