



2925 Sheridan Drive, Tonawanda, NY 14150  
Phone: 716-465-6555 Fax: 716-381-9735  
[www.purrfectpawsabc.com](http://www.purrfectpawsabc.com)

## **HOW TO BUILD A RESPONSIBLE RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR FABULOUS FELINE**

Relationship building and general cat care tips to attain kitty karma with your new addition!

Congratulations on your new addition! You and your new feline are about to begin a wonderful life together. Remember that building this new relationship will take time and patience – and a sense of humor would be good too! As you both learn about each other don't forget to look at things from your cat's point of view.

Kittens are babies with lots of learning to do about their new world. Adult cats in a new environment need to learn the rules too. Each moment they are learning. You are now parent, friend, playmate, teacher and protector for your new favorite feline. The best foundation you can give your kitten/cat is to make learning and exploring a positive thing. Never yell at or hit your kitten/cat – this will damage the relationship you've been working so hard to build.

### **HOW DO I MAKE FLUFFY'S NEW HOUSE A HOME?**

- ✓ Before Fluffy is given free range, kitten/cat-proof your home. Make sure that all wires are up and out of the way, plants are out of reach and that all cleaning supplies are properly stored behind closed doors. Get down on your hands and knees and make sure your kitten can't get into any mischief from her point of view.
- ✓ Make sure that you provide a litterbox, preferably a large plastic uncovered box, in a quiet, low-traffic area of your home. Use simple clumping litter and experiment to find the depth your kitten/cat prefers (usually 1-2 inches). For odor control, sprinkle some baking soda in the box. Scoop daily. Clean the litterbox completely once per week by discarding all the used litter, clean with hot, soapy water, dry well and add new, fresh litter. If you have multiple cats make sure you have at least one more litterbox than the number of cats in your home.
- ✓ Once you show your new kitten/cat the litterbox in its permanent location, she will return to it to do her business. You may calmly place Fluffy in the litterbox a few times daily for the first week to reinforce litterbox training. Always praise her in a calm, happy voice when she uses the litterbox. Then, reward her with some playtime or a tasty treat. Remember, if Fluffy associates negative experiences like loud or sudden noises with the litterbox, she may avoid the litterbox altogether.

### **HOW DO I HELP FLUFFY AND MY VISITORS GET ALONG?**

Pay close attention to your kitten/cat's personality. Some are more socially confident, while others can be described as nervous nellys. Some kittens/cats enjoy petting and others are content just to sit on your lap – no petting please. While building your own relationship with your kitten/cat you will probably find out pretty quickly which kind of kitten/cat Fluffy is.

- ✓ Never force your kitten/cat to be held by someone or to sit in their lap. The best relationships are the ones that develop naturally. Let your kitten/cat make the moves when meeting visitors while they respect Fluffy's need for rest and privacy. This is especially true for young children who often unintentionally make kittens/cats uncomfortable with their actions.
- ✓ Make sure your home is a comfortable place for your cat. Provide lots of creature comforts such as beds to curl up in, window seats, and a place to hide.



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- ✓ Groom your kitten/cat regularly as long as your kitten/cat is calm and happy while doing it. This will help your cat become comfortable with handling. Brush your kitten/cat, brush their teeth, clean their ears and clip their nails. And, make it a positive experience by using treats or play time as a reward.

### **HOW DO I STOP HER FROM USING TEETH AND CLAWS WHILE PLAYING?**

This is a common problem with some kittens/cats. Providing appropriate outlet for his behavior is the key.

- ✓ Never encourage any play with human hands or feet as the targets! Kittens/cats do not understand that they cannot play with fingers and toes like they play with the catnip filled fabric mouse they just pounced on.
- ✓ If teeth touch skin, play stops. When playing with another kitten/cat, rough play would end immediately with a hiss, a swat and walking away from the rough playmate. The kitten/cat gets the message loud and clear that rough play ends the fun stuff.
- ✓ Provide appropriate toys for rough play like fabric mice (catnip filled of course!), scratching posts/areas, small stuffed animals or interactive fishing pole type toys. These kinds of toys, when used correctly can keep a kitten/cat busy playing appropriately instead of getting into mischief. Ask store clerks which toys can be left out and which should be put away when your cat is not supervised to prevent injuries.
- ✓ When you do touch your kitten/cat, do so with a slow, gentle touch. Fast, firm touching can encourage rough play which we want to avoid around our sensitive skin.

### **DINNER TIME!**

Scheduled, routine feedings are best for your kitten/cat. If your cat is not eating or eating too much it could mean a trip to the vet. Dry food for your kitten/cat's life stage is the best diet. Soft food can be fed as a treat, but should not be the only food for most kittens/cats. Table scraps could be harmful to your kitten/cat's health; and Fluffy may learn to hold out for the better "candy" instead of her nutritious balanced dry food.

### **GOT MILK? NOT FOR FLUFFY!**

After six weeks of age kittens/cats do not need milk. It is best to provide fresh water only. Make sure you rinse the bowl daily. A clean water bowl will help ensure your cat does not search for alternative water sources like your toilet.

If your kitten/cat craves dairy products, ask your vet for appropriate dairy products that you can use as treats on an occasional basis without causing diarrhea.

### **HOW CAN I MAKE SURE FLUFFY HAS A HEALTHY, LONG LIFE?**

Regular visits to your veterinarian are a vital part of maintaining your cat's hopefully long and healthy life.

- ✓ Vaccinations and annual physical exams, which begin at six weeks of age, provide preventative care that may save your cat's life. Common vaccinations are for rabies, feline distemper, feline leukemia and heartworm. Talk to your vet about which vaccinations are recommended for your cat. Some vaccinations are recommended annually; others every three years.
- ✓ Flea and tick control are highly recommended. Even strictly indoor cats can get fleas – we can bring them home! Fleas can irritate the skin and make Fluffy anemic which lowers her resistance to disease. Ask your vet which flea and tick control product is right for Fluffy.



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### **SHOULD FLUFFY BE SPAYED OR NEUTERED?**

Spaying and neutering provide many benefits to your kitten/cat and to the entire feline community!

- ✓ Spaying and neutering can often decrease the appearance of behavior problems that can be influenced by hormones such as urine spraying and aggression.
- ✓ Risk for medical problems such as testicular or mammary cancer is significantly reduced when kittens/cats are spayed or neutered when young.
- ✓ Spaying and neutering help control feline overpopulation by decreasing the number of kittens/cats without homes.

### **TO DECLAW OR NOT TO DECLAW – THAT IS THE QUESTION!**

Scratching is a natural and pleasurable behavior for kittens/cats. The best way to deal with this difficult issue is to provide appropriate scratching areas/posts for your kitten/cat and reward her for using them.

- ✓ Declawing is a painful procedure involving the amputation of the bone at the end of each toe. Post-surgical pain can lead to problems such as litterbox avoidance and inappropriate elimination.
- ✓ Soft Paws can be used as nail caps that allow the kitten/cat to continue to scratch, but do no harm to the surface they are scratching. These do need to be replaced on a regular basis.
- ✓ Regularly trim your kitten/cat's nails to reduce damage from scratching.

### **INSIDE OR OUT?**

Your cat should remain indoors at all times. Indoor cats now live up to and beyond 20 years of age. Cats allowed outdoors unsupervised often face a much earlier death due to predators and disease.

- ✓ If you feel that Fluffy must experience the great outdoors, provide direct supervision and protection. You can leash and harness train your kitten/cat to take walks with you outside. Or, you can purchase an outdoor play area designed specifically to allow your cat safe outdoor time.



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