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Have you always wanted to be a cat parent? Are you on the verge of adopting a kitty? You may be all excited to fill your life with cuddles and fun but it is necessary to pause and ponder on a few things before you bring your feline friend home.

On average, a cat may share your life and space for over 12 years. Therefore, it is important for you to know how to choose a cat that shall be the best fit for your lifestyle. Before bringing a kitty home, take a moment to think whether this is the right time for you to take up this responsibility and whether you shall be able to make time for them and give them a loving home. If your answer to the questions is a resounding ‘Yes!’, this is our guide on how to choose a cat with whom you can make a lifetime’s worth of happy and loving memories.

## Things to Consider Before Choosing a Cat:

- **Should I get a Cat or a Kitten?**

  Kittens are tiny furballs of love and you get to nurture them from the very beginning of their lives. However, you have to be prepared to give kittens a lot of time and

attention as they have high energy levels and can be very naughty! While deciding how to choose a kitten, look for friendly responses towards you and their siblings in the litter. If a kitten scratches or bites frequently, they're likely to be more energetic and rougher as they grow. Always get your kitten examined by a vet before taking them home.

Adult cats are also great cuddle buddies. They will happily accept a life of napping on your lap at all times! They have lower energy levels than kittens so you don't have to be super vigilant with them. However, their personalities will be more rigid and less amenable to training. Try to obtain information on cat's personality, food habits, and preferences before bringing them home.

- ## Cat Gender

  What is the difference between male and female Cats? And why is it important when choosing a cat? Most cat parents do not usually worry about cat gender if they want just one cat or kitten. However, if you already have one cat and are taking home another, it is advisable to choose one of the opposite genders to ease tensions between them.

  Kitten gender is also important if you wish your cat to have babies. The choice of sex is unimportant if you do not wish to breed. Cat parents who are against breeding are advised to neuter kittens when they are about four months old. That is the age when kittens hit puberty and begin to exhibit signs of reproductive behaviour. Un-neutered male and female cats exhibit different symptoms. While the former mark their territories with malodorous urine, the latter either become pregnant or may come into season almost every two weeks.

- ## Cat Breeds: How do I Choose a Breed that is Perfect for me?

  Cats come in different breeds which determine their sociability, energy levels, and grooming requirements. Before getting a particular breed, you need to ask yourself these questions to gauge exactly how to choose a kitten best for you:

**How to choose a perfect breed:**

- What Kitten types would Best Match my Lifestyle?

Understand the temperament of a particular breed. If the kitten is playful, friendly, and lively, it would thrive in a home which has children or multiple people to play with. Cats who prefer solitude are best for single owners. Also, learn whether the cat prefers the outdoors or indoors to match it to your lifestyle.

- Are there Other Pets in the House?

Some cats may be very territorial and might not react well to resident pets. Always find out whether a particular cat breed is friendly with other animals and if they will react well to any bigger or smaller pets you may already have at home.

- How much time will I be able to Give my Cat?

If you are busy most of the time, opt for a more independent cat breed. You may choose a

furry that requires lots of human contacts if you stay at home for the most part. Similarly, if you won’t be able to spend much time on your kitty’s grooming, choose a breed with minimal grooming needs.

- ## Cat Personality and Communication

  Felines are often considered haughty and aloof as they do not show affection in the eager, excited way that dogs usually do. But this is not true. Cats can be very loving and may seek out human contact in many different ways. You have to recognise the ways in which felines communicate in order to understand these magnificent creatures.

  For instance, if you find a furry rubbing its face or tail against you as they purr, it means that you are its favourite! Similarly, if you find one calling out in a low voice, it is either a greeting or a plea for attention. Whereas, loud, relentless calls signify either urgent need, confusion, or complaint. There is also the mating cry. If a furry munchkin has its back arched and hackles raised and if it is hissing or spitting, it means that it feels threatened and is about to attack.

- ## The temperament of the Parent Cats

  The cat’s personality—whether they are friendly or unfriendly, bold or timid, etc—may be influenced by the genes of the parent cats. It isn’t usually possible to gauge the temperament of the father cat for moggies or non-pedigree cats, but breeders may consciously choose to mate friendly cats hoping to pass the trait down to the kittens. You can ask your breeder about the temperament of the parent cats and observe the other kittens in the litter. In the case of a moggie, you may observe the mother cat, if you can, for signs of friendliness or aggression.

- ## Types of Coats

  Types of cat fur may be hard to determine if the kitten is a moggie, especially when the father remains unseen. If, on the other hand, you are adopting a pedigree kitten from a reputed breeder, you are making a conscious choice regarding its coat. Fur babies with thick, long coats like the Persian require a lot of grooming but some hairless breeds such as the Sphynx also need plenty of skincare. This is also true for the sparsely coated Rex breeds. Ask your breeder about grooming requirements before you take your cat home.

- ## Cat Health

  The health of the kitten is one of the foremost concerns when considering how to choose a cat. As mentioned before, getting your cat’s health checked by a vet is essential before you take them home. Here are some tell-tale signs of a healthy cat that shall help you choose your furry friend.

- Eyes - If the kitten’s eyes are bright, clear, and free of any sort of discharge, it is a sign that they are healthy. Also, make sure that the kitten's eyes are open fully and that they can follow your hands.
- Ears - The ears of the fur kiddo should be clean and wax free. They should not have rashes or traces of ear mites. Also, check whether the cat or the kitten is showing any signs of itching around its ears.

- Nose - The kitten or cat you want to bring home should be breathing freely. Check their noses as you would their eyes and years. The kitty should have a clean nose with no signs of dryness, discharge, or blood.
- Mouth - When you check the furry kid's mouth, check the following: if the cat or the kitten has salmon pink gums with a nice set of white teeth without irregularities, there are greater chances that it is a healthy kitten.
- Bottom - Another important thing to check is the fur baby's bottom. The cat's bottom must not be sore and the fur should not be matted. Also check the kitty's bottom part for any kinds of soreness, discharge, rashes, or blood.
- Body - One of the important parts before taking home a furry munchkin is inspecting the body of the fur baby thoroughly. The feline should have a well-shaped and symmetrical body as per its breed with no bloating, lumps, or incrustations.
- Feeding - You can check whether the fur kiddo you are about to take home has a healthy appetite by visiting them during their feeding time. If that isn't possible, ask the breeder about their feeding habits and make sure you get them checked by a vet.
- **Early Socialisation**

  Early socialisation is especially important if you have resident pets or young children at home. You may then want a furry feline who is used to interacting with other animals and children. This prevents shock, aggression, and unfavourable behaviour on the part of the cat when it first comes home. Ask your breeder how the cat or kitten reacts to being handled by children or whether they have interacted with other animals like dogs. This shall help you decide whether your home shall be a haven for your new furry feline friend.

- **Cat Maintenance Cost**

  Adopting a cat involves an investment of both time and money. You will not only have to purchase the cat (if you aren't adopting one), but also make some arrangements beforehand to help them feel at home in their new surroundings. Some things you may have to spend money on include:

  √ Cat food and treats
  √ Water and food bowls
  √ A carrying crate
  √ Cat litter and litter box
  √ A cat bed
  √ Grooming equipment
  √ Scratching post

  You also have to save for recurring expenses throughout your cat's lifespan, which includes:

  √ Vet bills and medication for fleas, worms, and ticks
  √ Regular replacement costs for food, litter, and toys

  Before you bring a kitty home, check the regular expenses of a cat parent in your area. Expenses, particularly those for veterinary care, differ among areas and usually increase as the cat grows older.

  Cats also demand your time and attention. Not all cats are solitary by nature and may want to spend lots of time interacting with you. Kittens, for instance, tend to be a lot

more playful than adult cats. They will demand constant attention. Cats with thick, long coats demand more expense and time on their grooming. Keeping these things in mind will help you choose the purrfect companion for yourself.

# FAQ on Choosing a Cat:

All Questions Considering a Kitten

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1. **What should a first-time kitten owner know?**

   Always have food, water, and grooming essentials like brushes, litter and litter tray ready. Keep small items like rubber bands, marbles, bottle caps, etc out of your cat's reach as they may choke on these items. Be prepared for health emergencies.

2. **What are some mandatory cat items?**

   A cat cradle or carrier is a must for bringing your kitty into its new home. Cat food, water and food bowls, bed, litter boxes, grooming brushes, nail clippers, toys, and a collar with a tag are also must-have items.

3. **What is the most low-maintenance cat?**

   Cats aren't all that high-maintenance. Some might require frequent grooming and special attention, but most are easy to manage. Some especially low-maintenance breeds include the American Shorthair, the European Shorthair, Ragdolls, Bombay, Burmese, Abyssinian, Cornish Rex, and Scottish Fold.

4. **How should I prepare for a new cat?**

   To make your fur baby feel welcome in your home arrange for a warm bed and a safe space for them. Also, get them safe toys. Ease them into a suitable diet and keep plenty of food and water handy.

5. **Are female or male cats better?**

   The sex of a cat doesn't really matter since it is advisable to neuter it at about four months of age. Even without neutering, genes and the environment you provide for the cat determine their behaviour instead of cat gender.

6. **What is the best cat for a first-time owner?**

   Every cat is different with their unique personality, so there is no straight answer to this question. However, some friendly and easy-going breeds of cat recommended for first-time cat parents include Maine Coon, Somali, Siamese, Ragdolls, American

Shorthair, and Burmese.

7. **What age of kitten is best to get?**

   Kittens aged 8-12 weeks are ideal for adoption or purchase as they are in the process of weaning off at this age and ready to be more independent. Kittens are also easy to train and adapt to new surroundings smoothly.

8. **Should you keep cat food and water separate?**

   Yes, it is suggested to keep cat food dish and their water bowl in two different locations because cats don’t like the scent of their food or food particles floating in their water.

9. **What should I feed my adopted cat?**

   You can feed your adopted cat any cat food from the many available in the market. Just ensure the cat food has the right amount of nutrients needed by your furry friend.

10. **Is it ok to give cats wet food every day?**

    Yes, you can. In fact, giving your fur kid wet food everyday along with dry food will ensure they stay hydrated since wet cat food contains a lot of fluids.

11. **What is the first thing to do when you bring a cat home?**
    1. Give them a safe and comfortable place where they can hide.
    2. Ensure they have enough water, food, and a litter box handy.
    3. Visit their safe place frequently so that they get accustomed to your presence.
    4. Give them time and let them approach you. If you try to hold or cuddle it forcefully, you will only frighten it further.
    5. Use toys to entice them and get comfortable with you.

12. **How long does it take an adopted cat to get comfortable?**

    Give your fur baby at least three days to adjust to their new home. Some may take longer, but as long as your new kitty is eating, drinking, and using the litter box, there’s no need to worry.

13. **What items do you need for a new cat?**

    You should get a cat cradle or carrier, food, bed, water and food bowls, cat litter and a litter box. You should also get cat hammocks, safe toys, grooming tools like brushes and nail trimmers and a collar with an ID tag.

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