



Welcome to your new kitten. Bringing a new kitten home can be exciting and a bit daunting. Here are our top tips to help give your new kitten the best start in life. Don't forget we are always here for advice.

Kitten Management – Top Tips

The first few weeks and months are key to your kitten's development. Through the process of socialisation, they need to learn how to relate to people, animals and all the day to day objects and sounds that they will come into contact with.

The socialisation period take place at 2-7 weeks so it is immediately important to gently introduce them to being handled for short periods of time by a wide variety of people.

The use of a plug in pheromone diffuser which is readily available from your Veterinary Practice can help reduce anxiety and aid them to settle in to their new home quicker.

Feeding

Kitten's grow very rapidly and should be fed frequent small meals, choosing a good quality kitten food which is specially formulated to promote growth and also to provide plenty of energy. Ideally both wet and dry food should be fed in the first year of life, to help with food preference later in life should a special diet be required. Adult cat food is not suitable for a kitten as it will not meet the requirements of a growing kitten.

Kittens and adult cats have no nutritional requirement for milk, in fact this may lead to tummy upsets and diarrhoea. Fresh drinking water should be made available at all times, and should be positioned away from the food bowls. Most cats also prefer to drink from large bowls which are not made from plastic.

Litter Training

Most kittens learn how to use a litter tray whilst still with their mother. Initially they scratch around and play in the litter but soon associate the feel of it with the act of toileting. The fine, granular litter is generally more readily accepted by kittens, however please remember to empty and clean the tray regularly.

Remember to ensure the litter tray should be big enough for an adult cat to squat turn around and toilet in.

The litter is deep enough to allow good scratching around in.

The tray should be positioned in a quiet, safe and secluded location away from the food and water bowls.

Outside

Once your kitten is fully vaccinated and protected, you may want to gradually introduce your kitten to the outside world. The first time you do this, make sure you have the time to stay out with them and choosing a time when your kitten is hungry means they are less likely to run off.

A female kitten can get pregnant at 5 months of age, therefore, it is best not to let her outside until she has been neutered. Both male and female kittens can be neutered from 4 months of age and it is strongly recommended for a number of reasons.

It is also advisable to get your kitten microchipped before allowing them to spend time outside unsupervised. As the microchip holds a unique number to your kitten, it means if your kitten does go missing it can very quickly be returned to you.

Further information on a variety of feline subjects can be found on the international cat care website: www.icatcare.org.

Most importantly have fun and enjoy building a relationship with your new kitten.