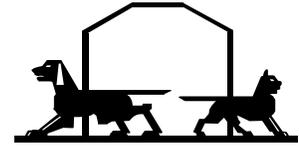


## CATS AREN'T DOGS!



United Paws volunteers, who collectively have much experience with kittens and cats, have compiled the following list of do's and don'ts for you to consult regarding your new companion for life. We have sometimes observed that people expect cats to behave like dogs. While cats and dogs can be the best of friends, they are very different creatures. So please read over this information sheet, even if you've had cats before, but especially if this is your first cat or kitten. Thank you.

- Cats **MUST** be transported in cat carriers; they must **never** be loose inside a car. Unlike most dogs, who come alive at the sight of the car keys, most cats **loathe** car journeys and let you know by yowling. Sometimes covering the carrier with a blanket and leaving only one viewpoint open (for ventilation) helps. *Don't ever give in and open the carrier door, no matter what the cat tells you!* A terrified cat loose inside a fast-moving vehicle is a recipe for disaster. She can crawl under the brake pedal and cling onto the carpet for dear life if you try to remove her. She can turn into jello if there's an inch of open window to escape through. So please buy a carrier right now before you adopt – you'll need it anyway to take the cat for her annual physical at your veterinarian's. United Paws will not release any cat or kitten to any adopter who does not have a carrier to take the animal home in. And please place a soft blanket inside the carrier.



- Kittens don't like the cold. If you adopt one of our kittens, he's probably been snuggled up with other kittens and his mom. So when you get him home, be sure to give him a cozy bed with plenty of snuggly blankets so he won't catch cold and won't miss his sisters and brothers quite so much. If you think he might be missing his siblings, you can fill a drinking-water bottle with tap-hot water, make sure it's properly stoppered by holding it upside-down to check there are no leaks, then stick the bottle inside an old sock to protect the kitten's delicate skin, and place that alongside him – it will feel like a warm friend. However, don't fasten him anywhere that he can't move away in case he needs to cool off. And keep checking the temperature of the water bottle – think how horrid a cold water bottle must feel!



The same goes for adult cats – do you know any cat who doesn't like a-snoozin' in a sun patch? Cats are territorial creatures, so removing one from his habitat (our foster home) and taking him to a new environment (your home) causes stress. Stress weakens the immune system, so a newly adopted adult cat can be prone to catching a cold. Therefore, make sure your new cat has a nice, warm bed. The cat's ears shouldn't be cold; neither should they be hot; warm is good. Listen for the purr.

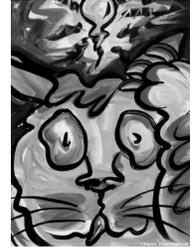
- Cats don't want to immediately socialize once they arrive at your house. They're stressed in a new environment following a car journey. The kindest thing you can do is take the cat in her carrier from the car straight to a quiet room away from dogs and children. (A room that doesn't open to the outside is safest.) Close the door to the room. Open the carrier door and let the cat decide when to come out and explore – don't reach in and drag her out. Leave food and water nearby and a litter box somewhere private away from her food. Then sit in the room a while, talking soothingly. When the cat's curiosity overcomes her shyness – and it will – and she leaves her carrier, stroke her and stay with her until you're sure she's comfortable with her new accommodations. She should start rubbing up against the bed legs and your legs.

Your cat must stay in this room for at least one week to be sure she knows this house is where she lives now. Fuss over her, give her toys and play with her with them, feed her yummy tidbits, keep her litter tray fresh, and change her water frequently (cats are meticulous about drinking water).

*After a week or preferably longer, you can open the door of the room the cat's been living in. Again, let her decide when she will venture out – don't pick her up and force her out. Don't allow your dog to intimidate her – what is a friendly hello from a big dog could be a terrifying attack to a cat. Friendship between a dog and a cat has to be on the cat's terms – dogs are fine with this once they understand the rules. Kindly but firmly stop any hissing or barking at each other. Try sitting between the dog and the cat, cuddling both.*

Let the cat explore the rest of the house for at least another week before you allow her outside if she's going to be an indoor-outdoor cat. If you have other cats, please consult the “2-Week Method for Perfect Cat Introductions” at our website or available from your fosterer. And make sure children know how to behave around cats – gently and quietly always, please.

- Children need to know cats are not dogs. For example, a game of chase to a puppy might mean everybody galloping around the garden enjoying a wild game of tag; a game of chase to a kitten is you scooting her fuzzy little ball across the carpet, and her chasing it. A day at the beach, including the car trip to get there, might be your dog's idea of heaven; it is your cat's idea of hell. The cat will take one look at the waves and head the other direction faster than you ever thought possible, right into the dune grass. And, unlike dogs, cats rely on themselves when in a scrape, not on us. A scared dog, as long as he hasn't bolted and got lost, will come to you when you call him (provided you've treated him well). A cat won't. So don't take the risk; leave the cat at home. She'll be very happy to have the house to herself for the day ... *ahh, peace and quiet at last, purr purr, I can catch up on my beauty rest ... stay out as long as you like, just be sure you come back in time for my supper!*



- “Curiosity killed the cat” – never was truer word spoken. Just as you would never let a human baby crawl around your house unsupervised, please don't allow a kitten to. Kittens have been known to fall into toilets and drown; they can claw themselves up a kitchen chair, only to get their heads stuck in the V-shaped rails at the back, which could choke them to death. Washing machines and dryers make us at United Paws shudder at the mere thought of what can happen to a kitten exploring inside one of them. Like puppies, kittens will chew electrical cords and either electrocute themselves or scorch their mouths horribly. Tiny kittens can be stood on, jammed in doors ... you get the picture. Please confine all kittens in a playpen whenever you're unable to supervise what they're up to. Don't expect a kitten to know what's safe and what's dangerous.



- Just as you don't expect a human baby to control his bladder or bowels, please don't expect a kitten to always make it to the litterbox. Most kittens, unlike most puppies, are extremely easy to housetrain – it's as if they've been born knowing what the litterbox is for. However, if your kitty decides playing hide and seek under the bed is the greatest thing he's ever done in his little life, but the litterbox is clear at the other end of the house, well, don't be surprised if he gets so excited he can't hold himself and doesn't make it. Suggestion: if you and your kitten are having a whale of a time, every five minutes or so, pick him up and pop him in his litterbox, just to remind him that nature can suddenly call, especially when he's having so-o-o much fun with you, his new forever guardian.

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