

Basic care of cats and kittens / The Cats Protection League.

Contributors

Cats Protection League.

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occasional flea that he may pick up. Grooming also helps to prevent furballs which can be harmful and form in the cat's stomach when he constantly licks loose fur.

EXERCISE AND FRESH AIR

All cats need exercise and, to keep your cat fit and to protect your furniture, a scratching post is a good investment; alternatively, you might bring in a log or make a scratching board to help your cat to keep his claws sharpened. This will assist him to flex his muscles and to shed old claw sheaths.

Toys, such as table tennis balls, cat mint mice or a cotton reel, are usually acceptable and keep the paws pattering.

Fresh air and sunshine are necessary to us all and, if your cat or kitten is confined to a flat without an enclosed balcony, fit a wire frame into one window to admit air and sunshine without the risk of his falling from a height.

It is unsafe to allow cats out on narrow ledges or open roofs several floors above the street. Many animals are injured and killed every year through lunging at a bird or butterfly and missing their footing. It is not true that a cat will always 'land on his feet'.

WORMS

Most cats suffer from worms at some time in their lives and the fact that you never see them does not mean that none is present. Periodic worming is necessary but do **not** worm old or sick animals without veterinary advice.

FLEAS

Even cats in the best circles have fleas from time to time. It is necessary to remove fleas from the cat and the eggs from his bedding and from wherever the cat sits or lies in the house, i.e. carpets, armchairs, etc. Use Nuvan Top spray or an insecticide shampoo powder **suitable for cats** and follow the instructions carefully.

YOUR CAT AT NIGHT

It is a mistake to shut your cat out at night. Apart from the risk of his being lost or run over, remember that **cat stealing** does go on all the time and many cats every year disappear forever.... perhaps to the vivisection laboratories. Put an elasticated collar on your cat and write your telephone number or address on it; if he should stray, you should then get him back. Put the milk bottle out by all means - but leave the cat in.

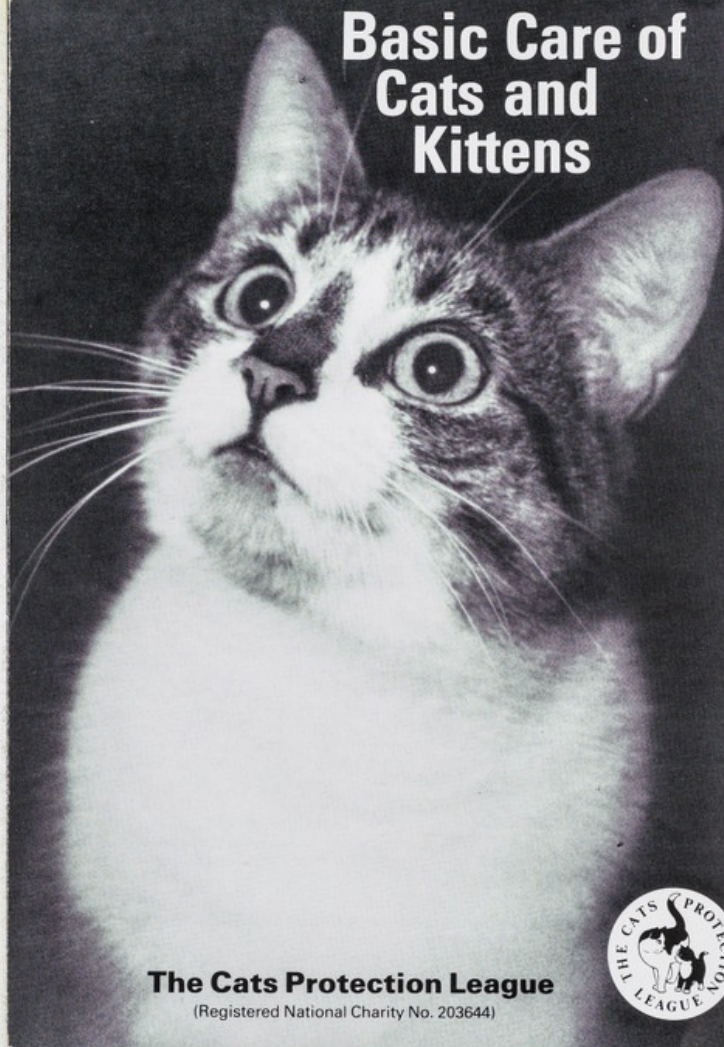
The best person to advise you about your pet, in sickness and in health, is your veterinary surgeon.

Support our work by joining us.

For further information on the care of cats or on membership, please write to:

THE CATS PROTECTION LEAGUE,
17 Kings Road, Horsham, West Sussex, RH13 5PP.
(Telephone (0403) 65566).

Basic Care of Cats and Kittens



The Cats Protection League

(Registered National Charity No. 203644)

SO YOU WANT A CAT OR KITTEN?

A cat or kitten makes a very worthwhile pet, providing that it is properly cared for; if you have taken, or are about to take, a **stray or rescued** feline into your home, then you are actively helping such organisations as The Cats Protection League in its work. There are many times more such cats than homes available.

KITTENS

Kittens are old enough to leave their mother at eight weeks.

A pretty, lively kitten can be an attractive proposition. Remember, however, that he or she will become a cat, after six months - perhaps for the next fourteen years. A kitten should be yours for life!

NEUTERING

The League advocates the neutering of all cats not required for breeding, in order to keep down the number of strays. One female cat can, in five years, be responsible for some 20,000 descendants and many of these must inevitably become homeless, with a life that offers only misery, hunger and disease.

Both male and female cats can be neutered at five months or older. In the case of the male, a simple routine operation only is involved. The female requires a longer operation which, although routine, usually necessitates a return to the veterinary surgery after seven to ten days for the removal of stitches.

Neutering produces a much more satisfactory and enjoyable pet. A neutered male should refrain from spraying about the house and leaving an unpleasant smell; he should also be disinclined to wander or to fight. It is not correct that a female cat should be allowed, on humane grounds, to have one litter before neutering.

To underline the importance of neutering, the League runs a scheme to help those in dire financial need to have their cat neutered. Application can be made for a voucher either to their local CPL Branch or to the Headquarters at Horsham.

HEALTH

Feline Enteritis and Cat Flu

Many cats and kittens die every year from these diseases. If not already inoculated against feline enteritis and cat flu, your new pet should have this done as soon as it has settled in. This can be done at 12 weeks of age or older. Your veterinary surgeon will give you a certificate - keep it safely, for many boarding catteries will not accept a boarder without one; remember that booster injections will be needed.

Teeth

Many older cats suffer from tartar on the teeth which can cause great discomfort to the cat but is usually removable by a veterinary surgeon. The formation of tartar can often be avoided by giving large pieces of meat or safe non-splinter bones to chew.

First Aid

In **Road Accidents** - if you have to move a cat from a dangerous road, lay a coat or blanket down, insert both hands under the cat and slide him onto the coat; pick up the edges of the coat and lower him into a basket or container if available. Keep broken limbs in as natural a position as possible. Wear leather gloves.

With **Scalds or Burns**, due to fire, hot fat, boiling water, acid, etc., use plenty of running cold water, dab dry and apply Vaseline frequently. The cold water will reduce pain and shock - but do not expect co-operation from your cat! If concerned about minor burns and scalds and in all more serious cases, **seek veterinary advice at once**.

Always consult your veterinary surgeon if you are concerned about your cat's health. He is the expert and is there to help and advise.

A healthy cat or kitten has bright, dry eyes, a nose clear of discharge but not dry or cracked, lips free from saliva and glossy, clean fur.

FOOD

A mixed diet is recommended - the same food given constantly is not only boring for the animal, it can cause illness (i.e. an all-liver or all-fish diet). A balanced mixed diet drawn from the following - red meat, cooked fish, liver, tinned proprietary cat food, egg, cheese, chicken and rabbit - provides for your cat's needs. Fish and chicken bones should be removed.

A kitten at eight weeks should be given four or five small meals a day including one or two meals of baby cereal or rice, made with milk. A spot of Marmite can be added to the food once a day.

Milk, in moderation, should be given **between** (not with) meals and fresh water should always be available for cats and kittens.

By the time the cat is an adult, the number of meals can be reduced to two per day and, as a rough guide, an average cat will eat half an ounce of food per pound body weight.

Cats normally eat a little grass and, if none is available in a garden, grow a pot of Cocksfoot Grass in your house or flat (seeds available from CPL - address on this leaflet).

SLEEP

Provide a basket or cardboard box, raised from the floor to exclude draughts, and lined with a small blanket, for your cat or kitten. Give a kitten a chance to sleep for a good deal of the day. Remember, he is a young animal, not a toy, and children should be taught to respect him as such and to allow him to sleep.

TOILET TRAINING

Cats are naturally clean animals but a new kitten needs to be shown what is required.

Provide a litter tray, filled with clean earth or commercial cat litter. Keep it in the same place, easily accessible to the kitten, and make sure it is cleaned regularly. Take the kitten to the tray after meals and on waking up from sleep. If there is access to a garden, introduce him to it gradually and he will soon learn to make his own toilet arrangements.

HANDLING

Contrary to popular belief, it is quite wrong to pick up a cat or kitten by the scruff of his neck; this can damage the muscles. Hold the cat or kitten with one hand under the chest and with the rest of his weight supported by your other hand. Kittens, particularly, must be handled gently as their bones are fragile.

GROOMING

Regular grooming of your cat is advised, especially for long-haired breeds. Brushing and combing will remove loose hair, dirt and dust and the