



## 10 top tips for adopting a cat from a shelter

The warmer months are Kitten Season which means shelters and pounds are at their busiest with unplanned and unwanted litters of kittens. It's also the time when unfortunately people surrender their cats to go on a holiday. Hence it's the time of year that shelters and pounds are at capacity. But for those that are not going away it is a wonderful time to add to your family by giving a cat or kitten a home.

If you are considering adopting a cat from a Shelter and providing a cat in need with their second chance at love, health and happiness, our "top tips for adopting a cat from a shelter" will help.

### Pre-adoption

#### 1. Consider what type of cat will suit your home and family

There's a lot to consider before adopting a cat or kitten. It's worth thinking about your lifestyle, other family members and pets so you can choose a cat which is the right age and temperament to best suit your family unit. Some of the questions you might like to consider are: Do you live alone? Do you work full-time? Do you live in a house or apartment? Do you go away often? Do you have young children or older children? Do you live in a share house? What other pets do you have? Does any family member have allergies?

Cat Protection Society of Victoria's Shelter Manager, Lisa Agius says mature cats can sleep 16 to 20 hours a day and are therefore the ideal pet for those who work full-time. Kittens are very active and require a lot more attention. And all cats have their own individual characteristics, whether it's shy and timid or cheeky and outgoing.

"All our cats have very different personalities," Lisa says. "It all comes down to the right fit and what you are looking for in a cat."

It's important to consider any other pets and family members in the household and carefully plan how to integrate your newest addition to the family, Lisa adds.

"Our highly-qualified staff at The Cat Protection Society spend time with people wanting to adopt a cat, including asking them to fill out a lifestyle questionnaire. We then help individuals and families choose the right Cat for them," Lisa says.

#### 2. How can you best prepare your home for your new feline?

One of the very best ways that you can help a new cat or kitten adjust and settle into their forever home is to prepare a room which they can be confined within whilst they slowly adjust to their new surrounds, including other pets or family members. Cats are extremely territorial, and they often feel uneasy coming into a new home.

Set up a small room such as a laundry with a cozy bed – igloo-style is perfect – kitty litter tray, scratching post or something elevated to play on, some toys, food and water.

"A cat needs to feel safe in their new home," Lisa says. "We recommend confining the cat to a small room at first to ensure it feels safe, then slowly introducing the cat to other parts of the house, family members and pets."





Much like you would child-proof your home for a toddler, scan your house for any hazards for cats. A scared cat will likely run off and hide, so ensure any spaces where your feline might get stuck are blocked off.

Lisa has another great tip for making your new feline feel at home: Pheromone sprays or diffusers. Manufactured pheromone products, which you can buy from the Cat Protection Society Retail Store, mimic the scent glands in a cat's neck and have a calming effect.

It's recommended that cats are always kept indoors away from other predators, and animals it can prey on like local birdlife. If you want your Cat to have some outdoor time, a good idea is to build an outdoor enclosure where it can safely roam.

### 3. Consider the cost of your new pet

Owning a kitten or cat is a long-term commitment, and it's worth planning for any costs in advance to ensure your new pet is within your financial means. Some of the items you may need to buy at the outset include: food bowls, collars, tags, litter and trays, grooming materials, toys, a bed, and a scratching post.

Ongoing costs will include food, litter, grooming materials and vet visits. According to the Business Insider (<https://www.businessinsider.com/how-much-it-actually-costs-to-own-a-cat-2015-8?IR=T>), the cost of owning a cat is around \$1000 in the first year – but this could be more if you have any unexpected vet visits. It may be worth investigating pet insurance to determine if this would save you money in the long run.

“Adopting a cat in need is an incredibly rewarding experience, but it is important to remember that providing a home for a kitten or young cat is a commitment for its lifetime, which may be between 16 to 18 or more years,” Lisa says.

### 4. Adoption costs

Adoption costs at the Cat Protection Society are:

Kittens up to six months old - \$170 \$190 from 1/12/19

Teenagers to young adults (6 months +) - \$110

Adult/senior cat 7+ years - \$60

This price includes desexing, microchipping, current vaccination, worming and defleaing, a cat carry box and two weeks' health cover valued at more than \$365.

More information on the cost of adopting a cat or kitten from our shelter is included on our website: <https://www.catprotection.com.au/adoption/fees-and-info/>

### 5. Find a good vet

Before you adopt a cat, visit and compare local vets and find one you feel comfortable with. You could also ask others in your area for recommendations. Veterinary clinics can be intimidating places for any animal, but especially for cats when dogs are frequent visitors. Don't forget the Cat Protection Society has an onsite cat-only clinic with veterinarians who are experts in cat health – and it's open to the public. You can find more information here:

<https://www.catprotection.com.au/vet-clinic/>

### 6. Understand local council requirements

You will need to register your adopted cat with your local council. Victorian legislation requires all dogs and cats over the age of three months to be registered with their local council and there are fines for not doing so. Councils vary with the number of cats /dogs you can own so you should check these with your local council prior to adopting. Fee reductions are available for seniors and desexed cats – which will apply to your adopted cat.

### How to adopt a cat

#### 7. Visit your local shelter and spend time with the cats

Whether you are adopting a cat from the Cat Protection Society or another shelter or pound, it's a good idea to spend some time getting to know the kittens and cats available. The Cat Protection Society team recommend bringing in the whole family when you are wanting to adopt; “You really have to take your time and build a relationship with the cat,” Lisa says. “Get to know them by spending time with them at the shelter. You've got to feel a connection with the cat and feel the cat wants a connection with you. Let the cat pick you.”

#### 8. Ask lots of questions

The team at the Cat Protection Society will spend time getting to know you to help you and your family choose the perfect cat for you. They will ask questions about your lifestyle, home-environment, family and previous experience owning a cat. This will help the team recommend the very best cat or kitten to suit your personal circumstances. You will then have the opportunity to meet, cuddle and play with these cats or kittens to see which one you or your family bond with best.

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This meeting will also provide the opportunity for you to ask any questions you may have. Chat with the team about the medical and behavioural history of the cat, and the cat's former home (if possible) to make an informed decision about which feline would suit your family. It's also important to look beyond the shelter, which can be a stressful environment. Behaviour in the shelter may not indicate behaviour in a loving home.

If you do find your perfect companion at The Cat Protection Society, the Adoptions Team will explain the needs of your new cat or kitten and provide advice on how to best settle them in at home.

### 9. What you need to complete your adoption

The adoption process can take some time, especially on weekends and during busy periods. If you do choose to adopt from The Cat Protection Society, we recommend allowing at least one to two hours to find and get to know your cat or kitten.

To complete your adoption, you will need to bring proof of your current address and photo identification (a driving license is recommended).

You can purchase everything you need for your cat or kitten from The Cat Protection Society at the time of adoption from our Retail Shop including food, bedding, litter trays and litter, toys and flea and worming products.

### 10. Consider adopting an older cat

If you are a senior, aren't home often (ie work fulltime), or have very young children, an adult cat might be more appropriate than a Kitten. Mature cats tend to have established temperaments and personalities. You will also know your cat's full size, haircoat length and texture. In short – there will be no surprises. Shorthaired cats require much less grooming than most longhairs, but longhairs actually shed less than shorthaired cats. Adult cats may sleep up to twenty hours a day, and will likely be fine with less of your time and attention.

“With younger families I like to recommend they adopt a one to five-year-old cat,” says Lisa. “These tend to be more settled and the kids will be able to have the cuddles they want, because it won't be always wanting to play.” An affectionate cat who just wants to be with them can be very calming for children, she adds.

The Cat Protection Society Adoption Shelter is open Monday- Friday from 10am-4pm and all weekend from 10am-3pm

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