

Pet Care of a Cat



Cats are a very popular pet in the UK. They don't need to be taken for walks; they clean themselves; can be left in the house on their own and are independent creatures who come and go as they please - which is just how they like it.

However, cats do need to be looked after very carefully.

Food and drink	Environment
<p>Cats are meat eaters. They cannot be vegetarian. They need foods which are high in protein, to help healthy growth and muscle tone, along with vitamins for healing and good eyesight. Proteins and vitamins are found in meat and fish products.</p> <p>Clean fresh water must be available at all times, as cats can become very ill, very quickly, if they become dehydrated.</p>	<p>Cats need a dry, comfortable environment. They tend to sleep anywhere they feel like, but it is advisable to provide them with their own warm bed.</p> <p>Cats also need a lot of places to hide. Naturally skittish and jumpy, cats need places where they can feel safe. An ideal place is on shelves or up high on bookcases.</p>

Cat behaviour

If cats display unusual behaviour, it can be a sign of distress, boredom, illness or injury.

If a cat is feeling distressed, these are signs to look out for:	If a cat is in pain or feeling frightened, they might:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• grooming themselves more than usual;• frequent hiding;• sleeping in a hunched up, protective position.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• become aggressive;• disappear for long periods of time;• avoid all people.

Cats don't respond well to a raised voice. They won't understand the reasons behind it and loud noises will scare them.



Sociable or not?

Cats can be very sociable animals - when they feel like it. They cannot be cajoled or forced to sit on knees, be friendly or have their head scratched, if they are not in the mood.

They usually prefer to live alone, and will often only tolerate other cats if they have been raised from being a kitten, with them. They don't like to share food, water, litter trays or beds. It can be an expensive business, keeping cats.

Things to remember:

- Cats need exercise. They need access outside, or if they are an indoor cat, need a lot of toys to play with. Sometimes they will need somebody to help them play
- Cats need to be able to scratch. It helps sharpen their claws and strengthens their muscles. If they are not provided with a suitable scratching post, they will use the furniture!
- If you are going on holiday, and you choose not to take your cat to the cattery, make sure someone can come to your house and keep the cat company for a while, each day
- Cats are intelligent creatures and can get bored easily. Keep them entertained, warm, properly fed and watered, with opportunities to find adventures, and they will be your best friend



Questions

1. What does 'cats are independent creatures' mean? Give two examples.

2. If someone you knew was getting a cat, what would you advise them about the food they should be giving it and the reasons for those food choices?

3. In your own words, describe the general character of a cat and why they need places to hide.

4. How would an owner know if their cat was feeling distressed? Give three examples of behaviour.

5. Explain why a cat might become aggressive, and what does that mean?

6. Would it be useful to raise your voice to a cat? Explain your thoughts.

7. What is the paragraph written in italics, about?

8. What does the word 'tolerate' mean in this text?

9. Which of the points in the section called 'Things to Remember' do you think is the most important point, and why?

10. What sort of person do you think would suit owning a cat? Explain your thoughts.
