

Cats - Basic Care

Cats have been domesticated for a long time. Domesticated cats originated in Africa and the Middle East between 4,000 and 8,000 years ago. There are many different breeds of cats but most popular cats are the non-pedigree or "mutt" cats. You should always investigate the cost before getting any kind of pet. There is an average of \$150 dollars of veterinary care. The cost of food is about \$170 dollars a year. The litter can be expensive as well, running about \$175 dollars a year. Don't forget the initial cost of getting your cat. The best place to get a cat is at your local shelter. Some of the costs of adopting a pet at a shelter cover your cat's shots, worming and "sterilization". You will still need to get a litter box and other supplies before you bring a cat home, such as cat food, food and water dish. You will also need a brush, toys, safety collar with ID tag, scratching post or pad, cat carrier and a cat bed. Again some shelters offer some of these items with your cat. It is best to call ahead of time and see what is included in your adoption cost. Feeding your new cat depends on the age. If you have an older cat feed them one large meal a day or two smaller ones. Kittens need to be fed several times a day until they are about 12 weeks old. If your cat is three to six months old then they need to be feed three times a day. You can give your cat canned food, but be sure to throw away any leftover food after 30 minutes. Keep in mind that canned cat food can be expensive and you may have to throw away some. It does not do anything for your cat's dental health like dry food can. The other alternative is to keep a supply of dry food out constantly. You must make sure your cat has plenty of water when offering dry food. Dry food is less expensive and helps prevent tartar build up on your cat's teeth and help promote healthy gums. Avoid buying generic cat food. They may not have the same guidelines as the brand-name food for your cat's health. If your cat is a kitten, make sure you give them food specified for a kitten. You will need to wash and refill their water dish daily. Do not give your cat cows' milk. They may seem to enjoy it but it can cause diarrhoea. An occasional cat treat for your cat is fine, but do not give them too much because they are fattening. If you find your kitten refusing food, try soaking it in warm water first. Kittens can be fed human baby food for a short time. Buy baby food that is designed for older babies and get chicken or beef. Then you will have to start gradually mixing it into their cat food. Cats will stay pretty clean so they rarely need a bath. You should brush you cat daily though. It helps keep their coat clean and reduces hairballs and there is less hair for shedding. Indoor cats will need a litter box. It should be kept in the same place all the time, like your bathroom. You will need to scoop out your litter box on a daily basis and dump and clean it every week. Cats will not use a dirty box. Try to avoid using deodorant and scents, especially lemon, when cleaning the litter box. You will need to provide a scratching post and or pad. Cats love to scratch and they need to. Cutting your cat's claws every few weeks will allow them to be blunt enough so they will not do serious damage to your furniture. The post will need to be sturdy and at least three feet tall so your cat can stretch when she scratches. It should be made of tree bark, burlap or sisal. You can also get a scratching pad. Sprinkle it with cat nip every couple of weeks to keep her interested.

About the Author

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