



Things to Consider Before Adopting a Cat

Cats are beautiful, affectionate, playful and intelligent animals. They make loving and amusing companions. Having a cat can even improve your health by lowering your blood pressure!

Can you make the commitment?

A cat can live 15 years or more. Ask yourself if you are willing to take on the responsibility for caring for an animal for the next 15 to 20 years.

A cat will require your time and attention throughout its lifetime. Be prepared to spend time playing with your cat, cleaning the litter box regularly, and grooming your cat. As they age, your cat may encounter health problems. Are you willing to administer medication to your pet on a daily basis if needed or put in time required for special care?

Does having a cat fit your home and lifestyle?

Though cats give the impression that they are independent creatures, they are social and need attention.

Cats are also predators and need to practice their hunting skills. They need play time to vent this energy and utilize their instincts. Playing with your cat and handling your cat often helps create a balanced. Bored and lonely cats can become stressed and revert to unwanted behaviours, such as over-grooming or house soiling.

Ensure that no member of your household has cat allergies, which may interfere with their enjoyment of the cat. If you are unsure whether you or your children have allergies, visit a friend's cat or visit the cats in the shelter before deciding to adopt. Many animals end up in shelters because their owners discovered they had allergies after adopting a cat.

Cats are wonderful companions for children and can help them learn about responsibility. Keep in mind however, that caring for the cat will most likely become Mom or Dad's responsibility. If your children are under 6 years old, consider waiting until they are a bit older. Young children may not understand how to properly handle an animal and a cat may then present a danger to them. Adolescent children may soon be leaving home for school or travel and usually

cannot take a pet with them, again leaving the parent(s) as the primary caregiver(s).

Be sure that you have the permission of your landlord and/or strata corporation to keep a pet in your home. Are you willing to accept some degree of damage to your home, particularly as your cat is first learning where it is inappropriate to scratch? Alternatively, are you willing to take steps to prevent damage to valued items?

Moving is one of the top reasons for animals being surrendered to animal shelters. If you foresee yourself moving over the lifetime of your cat, you must be committed to finding pet-friendly housing and taking your cat with you when you move.

Make certain the cost fits your budget

Do some research at your local veterinary clinic and pet store to ensure that the costs associated with having a cat fit into your budget. Cats require annual check-ups, vaccines (annually or every three years), tests for diseases etc. As they age, your cat may require dental cleanings by the veterinarian, blood tests, and medications.

Also be prepared for unexpected medical costs such as emergency care or treatment for a chronic health problem. Other costs for your pet include food, litter, litter trays, scratching posts, toys, and a carrier.

Should I get an adult or a kitten?

We are all attracted to kittens because they are cute and fluffy. But they don't stay this way for very long, and they will soon be adults.

Kittens require a great deal more attention and supervision than adults. Just like toddlers, they can easily get into trouble, climbing drapes, chewing on wires, etc. You will have to kitten-proof your home even more carefully than you would for a toddler because kittens are much smaller so they can get into smaller spaces.

Very young children and kittens, though a cute combination, is not a good idea. Kittens have not learned how to retract their claws and inhibit biting. Toddlers do not understand how to hold a kitten to avoid injuring it and they may also be bitten or scratched.

If you choose to adopt an adult cat, their personality is already developed so you will know what you are getting and can choose one that is right for you. Adult cats are much calmer than kittens and won't get into nearly as much trouble.

Many people prefer to have a kitten so that they can “start clean” and form a stronger bond with the animal. The truth is that an adult cat will bond with you just as strongly as a kitten, and you will be helping them since a cat’s chance for adoption decreases with age.

Should I get a male or a female?

Males and females make equally as great companions. Cats’ personalities are not dependant on their gender and neither is more affectionate, loyal or playful than the other. Select a cat based on its individual personality.

The most important factor is that they are spayed or neutered. Unneutered males will spray, roam, and fight with other cats (thus contributing to your vet bill). Females in heat will howl incessantly (causing you to lose sleep) and will attract male cats to your home (making your neighbours unhappy).

Why should I adopt a cat from WAG?

All WAG cats are vaccinated and neutered prior to adoption, and they receive any necessary medical attention. Your adoption fee helps to cover the costs of this veterinary attention and is much less than if you had to cover these costs yourself.

The shelter staff and volunteers get to know the different personalities of the cats in our care and we can help you choose a cat that is right for you. Also, you will be helping a homeless animal.

Keep in mind that cats in the shelter are sometimes under stress. Moving them to a home environment allows them to relax and show their true personality. Cats are creatures of habit and they don’t like change. Be patient as in some cases it can take them several weeks to adjust to a new home.

If you have any questions, you can always contact us at WAG: 604.935.8364.