

Raising the Purrfect Cat

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About the Author

Derald Freeman had utilized a number of years writing and has published over 80 articles on horticulture, "Memoirs of Derald Freeman", "60 ways To Toast Your Bread", and other books and pastiches. Derald was educated at East Texas Baptist College, spent 25 years in business management, and then started his own computer software business which continued for 30 years successfully marketing inventory software and peripherals nationwide.

The business was sold in 2000 and Derald retired. After that Derald continued using his computer skills working on software programs for other businesses, web site design and continued writing.

Dedication

This publication is dedicated to my wife, Dorothy. She is the one person who has stood by me through the many years of my life, who understood me better than any other person, who taught me patience, understanding, self-control, and how to get the most out of life. Dorothy brought out the best in me. To Dorothy, I wish my life experiences to be remembered for what I was able to give and accomplish.

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Below are excerpts from some of the chapters.

Cats as deities

The cat (*Felis catus*), which is also known as the domestic cat or house cat, is a small predatory carnivorous species of crepuscular mammal. The house cat is treasured by humans for its companionship. The added asset of being able to hunt rodents, insects and other unwanted household pests is not to be underplayed.

Cats have been associated with humans for over 9,000 years. Indications that the domestic cat existed in Egypt have been found in tombs of the ancient Egyptians with skeletal remains of cats that were buried with the human remains.

The cat in ancient Egypt was a sacred and respected creature and was venerated by all. It was in Egypt that the cat was first domesticated 4,000 years ago and where they were held in the most admiration and respect.



As early as 3500 B.C., Egyptians were domesticating wildcats from Africa, and these domesticated wildcats became treasured pets and were honored in many forms of artwork for their skill in hunting and killing rodents such as snakes, rats and mice.

There is evidence of wild felines around the banks of Egypt, but it was not until around 2000 BC that the fully domesticated cat was brought into the houses of Egyptians.

The first domesticated Egyptian cats in Egypt were more than likely used for warding off the common asp, cobra and other snakes, and they are also typical chasers of rodents. Slowly though, the cat became more to the Egyptians than just a normal animal, the cat became a god.

Cats were Gods, or were they?

Cats were worshipped as idols, and kept as agents of pest control and good luck. Probably the most famous Egyptian goddess after Isis was Bast, also known as Bastet. She was originally a sun goddess, but after contact with the Greeks she was changed

to a moon goddess. This was probably due to the Greeks association of her with Artemis. Bast was both favored and feared as a goddess. To those who were in her favor, she gave great blessings, but to others her wrath was legendary. Cats were sacred to Bast, and to harm one was deemed the greatest transgression and bore the penalty of death. Great value was placed on the domesticated cat by the Egyptians. Cats curtailed the spread of disease by killing rats and other pests. Ancient Egyptians must have noticed the connection between rats and disease. The worship of Bast in Egypt began around 2890 B.C. and lasted for about 3000 years. She then assumed a new role as a symbol of maternity and fertility. In Egypt male cats were called Mau and females Mait. Early Egyptians believed that the glow from a cat's eyes held captive the light of the sun.

Cats knew the words to vanquish the powers of darkness and would whisper them to people who loved and befriended them. The black cat was believed to carry particularly potent magical powers. Tomb paintings pictured the cat seated beneath a woman's chair with the children showing affection for both. Statues of cats were placed outside houses to protect the inhabitants, to ward off evil spirits and gain favor with Bast.

During the New Kingdom (1540 to 1069 BC), there were many hieroglyphic writings and tomb contents that started revealing cats as part of everyday life. The ancient Egyptian writings depicted their cats on hunting excursions and cats may have been trained to retrieve fowl and fish.



Selecting a cat requires looking to the future

“Cats without another cat in the house to play with will be lonely, even though they have you. You are not there all the time and when you are you do not want to play as much as the kitten. You need to give serious thought into what kind of cat you want to spend the next 10 to 15 years with. Each cat breed has a typical set of personality traits and behavioral qualities. Making a list of qualities for a cat will help in choosing a breed. Do you prefer a cat that is not particularly noisy or demanding or do you like talkative cats? Do you want a peaceful, quiet lap cat that will sit on your lap for hours on end or want a very active cat with lots of energy? According to a new study sponsored by the Pet Food Institute, the number of pet cats in America reached a new high in the year 2000, and Americans owned more than 75 million pet cats. Of those approximately one in 10 is longhaired, although that can depend upon the area. That means Americans own approximate 750,000 domestic longhairs.”

Am I Ready for a Cat?

Think seriously about this important step, which is much like entering into a marriage. Bringing a cat into your home should be a lifelong commitment for all family members, so give it serious thought. I have seen too many cats in adoption centers that are one year and older and no one wants to adopt them. Their right to a good home has been taken away from them because someone was not committed to the responsibility. A good place to start is by understanding that no one truly owns a cat. Cats are sentient beings, and your cat deserves to be a family member rather than "an occasional pet."

You all should share the commitment and work and do it without griping. If one family member disagrees on the adoption there will always be discontent in the home and mistreatment of the four-legged member. If you can get by these questions then you might be ready to take on a cat.

Characteristics in breed cats

Temperament

These will include some of the more affectionate, friendly cats.

TYPES: Siberian, Bombay, American Curl, Tonkinese, Abyssinian, Maine Coon, Manx, American Shorthair, Singapura, Birman, Himalayan, Norwegian Forest Cat, Persian, Scottish Fold, Turkish Angora, Turkish Van, Havana Brown, Japanese Bobtail, Sphynx, Somali, and Russian Blue (very affectionate but shy)

Intelligence

Intelligent Breeds varies widely within each breed, so it's impossible to rank every breed based on this trait. The following lists the more clever breeds overall, but there are brighter and duller cats within each breed:

TYPES: Siamese, Manx, Abyssinian, Oriental, Tonkin's, Bombay, Occitan, Singapore, Somali, Havana Brown, Russian Blue, Colorpoint Shorthair, American Bobtail, Balinese, Chartreux, Sphynx.

Talkative breeds

The cat's meow is her way of communicating with people. Cats meow is a vocalization to say hello, to ask for things, and to tell us when something's wrong. They may not be getting the food they need, may need fresh water, or may be feeling ill. Kittens meow to let their mother know they're cold or hungry.

Once they are older adult cats don't actually meow at each other, just at people. Cats also yowl—a sound similar to the meow but more drawn out and melodic. Adult cats use the yowl at one another during breeding season.

If your cat meows to say hello you have an especially vocal cat who is telling you how glad she is to see you! If you believe your cat cries out of loneliness because you spend too much time out of the house, consider spending more quality time with her when you are home. You may need to have a second cat to keep your cat entertained while you're away. If your cat meows at you for food, look into what you are feeding her.

TYPES: Oriental, Japanese Bobtail, Egyptian Mau, Norwegian Forest Cat, Siberian, Sphynx, Tonkinese, Turkish Angora, Burmese, Cornish and Devon Rex, Turkish Van.

Non-talkative breeds

If you like it quiet around the house look for these lovely partners.

TYPES: American curl, Himalayan, Maine Coon, Persian, Ragdoll, and Russian Blue.

Lap cats

There are exceptions to the rule, but breeds that are more inclined toward lap-sitting include the following.

TYPES: Burmese, Cornish and Devon Rex, Ragdoll, Siamese, Ocicat, Sphynx, LaPerm, Persian, Tonkinese cats may lap-sit, but prefer sitting on their favorite humans' shoulders instead.

Why do cats scratch?

Beneath cats' soft furry paws are needle-sharp claws capable of destroying a couch or drawing blood. You probably think that your kitty scratches to keep his claws razor-sharp. But scratching is far more complex than that. Your cat's claws are another fascinating aspect of fluffy's anatomy. The shape of the claw is sickle-like, with a needle-sharp tip thus allowing the cat to grip his prey and hold onto it. The cats' claws grow continuously sharper while dogs' claws are kept short by friction on the ground. A cat has tendons on the top and bottom of the claw under their skin. The top tendon retracts the claws back so they do not touch the floor when walking. The bottom tendon pulls the claws forward so they can catch the prey.

Cats like to scratch – no doubt about that and your sofa or stuffed chair is usually the most convenient soft object around. Your cat's scratching behavior helps loosen and remove the outer layer from the cuticle and fall off. There will be many nail husks at the bottom of a well used scratching post. Scratching also exercises your cats' muscles of their forelegs, shoulders, and tendons of the paws.

Scratching is also an instinctive method of marking territory. Outdoors cats will scratch, spray, and rub their bodies against objects to mark their territory. This signals other cats of their presence and claims the territory.

When do we eat?

If your cat meows at you for food, look into what you are feeding her. Many cat foods have excessive meal and not enough meat by-products in it. The cat might be under nourished. They know if they are.

If you do not leave food out all during the day feed her at prescribed times so she learns that it's futile to ask for food at other times. If that doesn't work, buy an automatic feeder that you can schedule to open at specific times. At least then she's more likely to meow at the feeder than at you! This is especially useful if your cat wakes you up in the morning to be fed.



Do not feed your cat while you are eating your meals. This is a bad habit to start. Some human foods are toxic to cats, even in small amounts, such as onions (even if cooked with the food), or chocolate.

Most human food is either too highly spiced, or too fat-laced to be good for cats. Even though the food may smell appealing, tummy aches, diarrhea or vomiting might be the end result.

A cat regularly fed human food will either lose his taste for his own food, or be too full to eat it and will lose the essential nutrients, including taurine, so necessary for cats to survive and thrive.

Allowing cats to eat "at the table" is creating your own home-grown monster. You may find your guests appalled at having a cat at the table, and your cat will be miffed at being banished.

In the case of holidays like Thanksgiving, I suggest feeding your cat a meal of his own food directly before your guests arrive. Chances are, he'll find a place to sleep while the humans eat. Don't feed your cat the turkey leftovers.

And above all things, please, your cat needs to have his own bowls that you serve the food in. They get used to this as assume these bowls belong to them.

Bad eating habits to avoid

Let's face it: some cats are inveterate "bums" and will beg and plead most appealingly while you try to eat. The best reason to discourage feeding cats "people food" is that there are a number of foods that are toxic to cats. You may have forgotten that the gravy slathered over your Thanksgiving turkey used broth that was flavored with onion, among other things. While it is tasty and harmless to humans, onions are very toxic to cats. The following is a list of foods that cats should never eat:

Protein in cat food

These figures were pulled from a veterinarian we site. I have also compared various brands and came up with similar results.

- ❖ Brand A Premium Canned Food: Protein, 8.5% | Moisture, 78%
- ❖ Brand B Premium Dry Food: Protein, 32% | Moisture, 10%
- ❖ Brand C "Supermarket Brand" Canned Food: Protein, 10% | Moisture: 78%

Brand A is a premium brand, but they are giving three-fourths water and very little protein. Water is cheap and results in more profit for them.

Brand B is a premium brand also, but has low moisture content and a much better proportion of protein.

Brand C is a "Supermarket brand". Notice that this also has high moisture content.

The 95% Rule

When cat food is labeled they must adhere to rules on how to label the product. The manufacturer cannot label a can "Chicken cat food" and only have 50% chicken in it.

A cat food may not be labeled simply "Chicken for Cats," or "Chicken Cat Food," unless it contains 95% or more chicken by total weight of the product.

The 25% Rule

Foods labeled "Chicken Entre," "Chicken Dinner," "Chicken Feast," must contain 25% to 95% chicken. Combinations, such as "Chicken and Beef Dinner" must contain a total of 25% to 95% of the combined meats, listed in order of quantity, and the second meat listed must comprise at least 3% of the total weight.

The 3% Rule

A food labeled "Kitty Stew with Chicken" must contain 3% or more chicken.

"Flavor"

Barely worth mentioning here, but if you see something labeled "chicken flavored," be assured that the product is unlikely to contain any chicken at all.

Ash Content

Cat food contains ash because meat in cat food is cooked at a high temperature and leaves a residue of ash, calcium, magnesium, potassium and other trace minerals. A higher proportion of meat content naturally will often contain more ash unless it is better quality meat which may contain less ash. Cats require a certain amount of ash in their diets but too much causes urinary tract problems.

Water

Cats need about 1 oz of fresh, clean water per pound of body weight per day. They need more during hot and humid weather. Make sure you empty out the old water every day and rinse the bowls with very hot water before refilling them with clean, fresh water. Once every few days, wash bowls with a non-toxic disinfecting dish soap and thoroughly rinse off all the soap and towel dry the bowls. We recommend filtered water. Do you think that is spoiling your cat? If you use a water filter for yourself I ask you "who's spoiled?"

Here is a short list of some foods to not feed your cat:

- ❖ Alcoholic beverages cause intoxication, gastrointestinal irritation, respiratory distress, coma & death.
- ❖ Avocados CAUSE gastrointestinal irritation, vomiting, diarrhea, respiratory distress, congestion and fluid around the heart resulting in death.
- ❖ Citrus may cause vomiting in cats.
- ❖ Coffee
- ❖ Onions, Garlic, & Related Root Vegetables contain a substance (N-propyl disulphide) which destroys red blood cells in the cat.
- ❖ Green tomatoes and raw potatoes causes lower gastrointestinal problems.
- ❖ Chocolate is very toxic to both cats and dogs.
- ❖ Grapes and Raisins should not be giving to pets in any amount.
- ❖ Milk is not toxic to cats, but the cat may have adverse effects because many cats are lactose-intolerant and causes stomach upset, cramps, and gassiness.
- ❖ Rhubarb
- ❖ Soy & Rice Bran

Some interpretive cat sounds.

Cat vocalizations

To illustrate the range of cat vocalizations, their differences can be broken down into three broad categories: murmurs, vowel patterns and strained intensity patterns.

- Murmurs, produced while the mouth is closed, include purring, mating vocalizations and the closed-mouth "mhr?" uttered when cats anticipate a treat.
- Vowel patterns include the more typical "meow" and are produced when the cat opens her mouth and then closes it. In contrast, strained intensity vocalizations are produced when the cat holds her mouth open throughout the sound--clearly aroused and upset. As might be expected, such emotional sounds include growling, hissing and screaming--vocalizations we hope never to hear from our pet cats. One of our cats utters "ack-ack-ack" and "chi-chi-chi" to talk to us. The intonation tells us it means "hello", "outside", or "feed me". When I fix eye contact with the Maine Coon and say "aaaahck" she will open her mouth as to vocalize but the sound does not come out. It has the same communication as the other cat mention above. Since we are looking at each other she just doesn't think it is necessary to create the sound.
- Strained intensity patterns

Here are examples of cat sounds.

- prrrt means "Aren't I wonderful?"
- mrrrAOWr! means, "You will find OUT how far I've come from jaguars!"
- Short meow - standard greeting.
- Multiple meows - excited greeting.
- Mid-pitch meow - plea for something.
- Drawn-out mrrroooow - a demand for something.
- Low pitch MRRRooooowww - a complaint or displeasure.
- High-pitch RRRROWW! - anger, pain or being fearful.
- Chatter (rapid teeth-chattering jaw movements) - excitement, frustration (when prey is out of reach or escapes)
- Chirrup (Also called "chirring", a cross between a meow and a purr with rising inflection) - friendly greeting sound, often used by a mother cat to call to her kittens.
- Purr - invites close contact or attention

I hope you enjoy the entire book and find everything you need for your feline companion.

--- by Derald Freeman