



## How To Kitten-proof Your Home

1. Look around your house first, at high shelves and low cupboards and hidden nooks. Do you see things that kitty might break, or harmful substances she might ingest?
2. If you're into needlework, keep your supplies in a closed container. Needles and thread might appear to be fine playthings, but can be fatal if your kitten swallows them. Kittens playing with balls of yarn may make delightful pictures, but put the yarn away right after the photo session.
3. Fold and secure your window blinds cord with a rubber band, out of kitty's reach. If she gets tangled up in it, she could strangle.
4. Kittens are wonderful little packrats. If you don't want to find your floors littered with garbage, invest in covered wastebaskets and kitchen garbage containers.
5. Always keep the door to your clothes dryer closed, and double-check inside before using it. Cats like to find dark, warm places to sleep, and the results could be tragic.
6. Keep the floor clean of stray rubber bands, ribbon and twine. All are hazardous when ingested by a kitten.
7. Keep cupboard doors and dresser drawers securely closed. Cats can find all kinds of mischief inside, and can be injured if you close a drawer and the kitten is behind it. Use child-safe fasteners for kitchen cabinets.
8. Cloth drapes are better left out of reach of your furry 'curtain-climber'. Tie them up securely until your kitten is trained to a scratching post.
9. Keep your toilet lid down at all times, lest kitty fall in or drink from it. Better yet, keep your bathroom off-limits to your kitten unless you absolutely have to keep her litterbox there.
10. Do not keep your kitten in the garage, and always keep the doors closed. Anti-freeze is very tasty to animals, and is just one of the common poisonous substances found in garages.
11. Cover electric cords, such as the tangle from your computer, with covers sold for that purpose. Caution: wrapping electric cords could be a fire hazard.
12. There are a number of household plants poisonous to cats. A link to a list is at the bottom of this article.
13. Remove all breakable valuables from high shelves and store them in a cabinet with a door.
14. Use animal-safe insect repellent. Commercial roach and ant poison will kill cats if ingested.

### Tips:

1. The real secret to kitten-proofing is to look at your home through the eyes of a cat. Find everything that looks like a swell toy, and if it's something harmful, get rid of it or make it safe.

2. Bitter Apple or lemon-scented sprays are both great for marking areas you want to be off-limits. Cats hate the taste and/or scent of them.

3. If your kitten will be indoors-outdoors, make sure your yard is clear of snail poison, rodent traps, and other hazardous material. Better yet: fill your house with attractive toys and make him an inside-only cat.

## **Introducing Your New Kitten to Your Family**

### ***With Care, Your Kitten's Integration Can Be Almost Painless***

By Franny Syufy, About.com Guide

#### **No Existing Pets**

If you have no other household pets, integrating a new kitten into your home is a fairly simple matter. You'll automatically make her one of the family, and will no doubt spend a great deal of time with your kitten, bonding and generally "spoiling" her.

However, keep in mind that your home is a strange new place to your kitten, and depending on her background, she will need time to adjust and explore. She may have come from a foster care situation where care was taken to bond her to humans. On the other hand, many kittens spend their early weeks in a shelter - either in a cage with littermates, or in a "room" setting with a number of other cats, young and adult. In the latter case, your new kitten will require lots of love and patience, plus the chance to be alone when she requires it. Your care in providing these needs will help ease your kitten's fears about her new environment.

Set aside a private area, with a bed, food, and a litter box for your kitten. It doesn't have to be a whole room, but can be a corner screened off from the room's normal activity. We call this a "Safe Room."

Give your new kitten space when she needs it, lots of loving attention when she asks for it, and she soon will feel at home with you.

#### **Integrating With Other Pets**

It's another matter entirely, however, if you have existing dogs and/or cats in your family. First, it's important to quarantine the little newcomer(s) until they have had their veterinary exam, to prevent spreading diseases or parasites they may carry. Sadly, they may too be carriers or be infected with FIV or FeLV. Kittens quite often have URIs (upper respiratory infections), including Bordetella (kennel cough). URIs have an incubation period of up to three or four weeks, thus even a reputable rescue group may be unaware of this condition in a newly adopted kitten.

So, put your kitten in a separate Safe Room for a couple of days. Make sure she has her own bed, food and water dish, and litterbox. After she has been cleared by your veterinarian, you can open the door to her "safe room" a crack, to allow the other cats to sniff and peek at her. Rub her with a towel to impart her scent on it, then put the towel in the sleeping area of your existing cats, so they'll become accustomed to her smell. Reverse the tactic by giving her a towel or blanket with the scent of your older cats. In a couple of days you can put her in a carrier and allow the other cats to come in and sniff her. Expect a bit of growling and hissy-spitty behavior at first; it's instinctive.

For "holdouts," try not to rush things, but provide occasions where the older cats and the new kitten can share pleasurable activities. My cats enjoy playing "chase the ball" with little Billy. The "ball" may only be a crumpled up piece of paper, but it offers interactivity as the cats compete to be the first to bring down the "prey." It's surprising sometimes how often they let Billy "win."

Soon-- within a week or two, the bunch of them should settle down and be getting along just fine. The key is not to rush things, and to give both sides a lot of individual attention in the interim. In no time at all, your kitten will be part of your clowder of cats. *(FYI... A clowder is the correct term for a group or colony of cats. A Kindle is the collective noun for a group of kittens!)*