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How to make your kitten feel comfortable and safe in their new forever home

Outdoor cats like to explore, but their needs and behaviours are very different to indoor cats. If your cat likes to go outdoors, we have some helpful tips and advice on keeping them stimulated, happy and more importantly safe, by ensuring that their curiosity doesn't get them into any bother.



Outdoor kitten advice

Your outdoor kitten will naturally want to go out and explore the big wide world and define their own little territory. Check out these useful tips on introducing your kitten to the outdoors to help ensure they come back safely.

Before you even think of letting them go outside

live nearby a busy road? Do any of your nearby neighbours have a dog? Do any of your neighbours use poison pellets for slugs or rats or have any poisonous plants?

Make sure you consider all of these things before letting your little kitten roam free in the outside world and if it isn't safe enough for them take precautions to ensure it is safe or have another think about whether to keep your kitten as an indoor cat instead.

Make sure they're ready

The timescale can be different for each kitten, and a lot of the timescales depend on your cat's personality

Whilst some kittens are confident and happy to push themselves, others might be frightened of the thought of the outside world. Don't push your kitten, just let them go at their own pace.

You should always wait until your kitten has been neutered and they've had all their injections. This will ensure they don't pick up an infection or lose their way home by going wandering. This would usually be when they get to around 6 months of age.

Preparing them properly

You should always make sure your kitten is microchipped before letting them go outside.

Whilst microchipping isn't a legal requirement with cats, you should always see it as an important consideration around being a responsible pet owner. Always make sure you keep the microchip details up to date.

We also recommend a [safety collar](#) to ensure that it's clear your kitten has a home, and the safety release will ensure they don't get trapped in a difficult situation. Collars can also be reflective to help your cat be seen by car drivers in the dark and help birds and mice know your cat is around, if they like to hunt.

The first paw prints in their newly extended world

Always supervise your kittens first steps outside, if you have a garden walk around it with them and make sure they don't go too far so they can't come back when you're ready to go inside again.

It's normal for your cat to be nervous about their first outdoor encounter so ensure you don't push them if they're showing signs of anxiety or uncertainty.

It is a good idea to use a recognisable sound to call your cat back in when it's time for dinner or they need to come indoors.

You can teach your cat to recognise certain sounds by associating them with a treat. Simply shake the treats every time you want them to come home at the same time as calling their name.

Remember, if you have a dog always keep them inside during the first times you let your kitten outside. They might be inclined to chase your kitten if they see them outside.

Is a cat flap right for your cat?

There are a lot of [cat flaps available at Pets at Home](#), and having a cat flap is great for your cat to be able to access the house when you're at work in the day.

Although, this does give them the freedom to come and go as they please, they might need a little encouragement to use it to start with.

Make sure you choose the right type of flap for your needs.

We recommend electronic cat flaps that prevent other cats from getting into your house – this could cause stress to your cat so it is really important to make sure you don't cause issues.

Cats might also be unsure if your flap isn't clear as they cannot see through the other side, so this is certainly something important to bear in mind. When encouraging them through in the first instance, tape open the flap and have a treat on the other side and gradually leave it closed to get them used to the action.

Don't forget to always check them over

Cats are really independent creatures and once they're used to going outdoors you can trust they will find something to entertain themselves with when they go on their next adventure. It is really important to not overlook the importance of checking them over each time they return to the house.

This is to check for any signs of injury, and to remove anything that might have gotten stuck in their fur. Greet your kitten home by giving them a stroke all over.

This is a not only a great way to say hello and welcome them home, but will ensure your cat hasn't hurt or injured themselves whilst outside, and you can remove any debris from their fur at the same time.



Toilets

Whether your cat is indoor or outdoor, they will still need to have access to a [clean indoor toilet facility](#) that is away from where they eat and sleep. Ensuring that your litter tray is cleaned daily is important will prevent accidents as well as make the litter tray more hygienic.

There are a number of different types of [cat litter available in your local Pets at Home](#) store and it's usually best to try out a number of different types to see what works for your cat the best.

You should always lay down around 3cm of litter into their tray, to ensure your cat has enough litter to dig with as they would in an outdoor environment.

Always ensure you're looking out for your cat's welfare and safety in the right way and protecting them from the unexpected.

Pet insurance can help your kitten

Good pet insurance providers make sure that their policies cover many of the risks that come with owning a cat.

Find out more about keeping your beloved pet protected from the unexpected with our recommended partner, Petplan® by taking a look on our [insurance page](#) for more information.

Terms, conditions and excesses apply and may be varied on renewal. No cover is provided for pre-existing conditions.

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