

MAISON MALEB'S

FIRST CAT CHECKLIST

*You don't
need
everything.*



*You need the
right things.*



ESSENTIALS BEFORE THEY ARRIVE



LITTER BOX ONE PER CAT, PLUS ONE EXTRA. PLACE IT SOMEWHERE QUIET, ACCESSIBLE, AND AWAY FROM THEIR FOOD. NOT IN A CUPBOARD. NOT SOMEWHERE YOU HAVE TO MOVE THINGS TO GET TO. A TRAY THEY WILL ACTUALLY USE.



LITTER UNSCENTED, CLUMPING PREFERRED. IF THEY ARE COMING FROM A RESCUE OR BREEDER, ASK WHAT THEY HAVE BEEN USING AND START WITH THE SAME. CHANGE IT GRADUALLY IF YOU WANT TO SWITCH.



FOOD AND WATER BOWLS WIDE AND SHALLOW. CATS HAVE SENSITIVE WHISKERS AND DISLIKE HAVING THEM COMPRESSED BY THE SIDES OF A BOWL. CERAMIC OR STAINLESS STEEL. PLACE WATER AWAY FROM FOOD – CATS INSTINCTIVELY AVOID WATER NEAR A FOOD SOURCE, WHICH IS A SURVIVAL INSTINCT WORTH WORKING WITH RATHER THAN AGAINST.



QUALITY FOOD WET FOOD AS THE PRIMARY COMPONENT OF THE DIET. A NAMED PROTEIN AS THE FIRST INGREDIENT. NOT "MEAT DERIVATIVES." NOT A BRAND DESIGNED PRIMARILY TO PHOTOGRAPH WELL IN A BOWL. FOOD THAT SERVES THE CAT'S BIOLOGY, WHICH MEANS HIGH MOISTURE AND HIGH PROTEIN.



SCRATCHING POST TALL ENOUGH FOR A FULL BODY STRETCH – MOST COMMERCIAL POSTS ARE TOO SHORT. SISAL ROPE IS RELIABLE. PLACE IT NEXT TO WHEREVER YOU DO NOT WANT THEM TO SCRATCH, NOT IN A CORNER THEY WILL NEVER VISIT.



CARRIER TOP-LOADING IS SIGNIFICANTLY LESS STRESSFUL THAN FRONT-LOADING, FOR THE CAT AND FOR YOU. LEAVE IT OUT PERMANENTLY WITH SOMETHING SOFT INSIDE IT. A CARRIER THAT ONLY APPEARS BEFORE VET VISITS BECOMES SOMETHING THE CAT DREADS. A CARRIER THAT IS ALWAYS AVAILABLE BECOMES FURNITURE.



SAFE ROOM PREPARED ONE SMALL ROOM TO START. CLOSE DOORS TO THE REST OF THE HOUSE. REMOVE HAZARDS – CHECK THE DANGEROUS ITEMS LIST BEFORE YOU ASSUME ANYTHING IS FINE. ADD AT LEAST ONE HIDING SPOT AT FLOOR LEVEL AND ONE AT HEIGHT IF POSSIBLE. THEY WILL TELL YOU WHEN THEY ARE READY TO EXPLORE FURTHER.

KITTEN OR ADULT

WHAT CHANGES

	KITTEN	ADULT
Meals per day	3–4	2
Energy level	High, erratic	Established rhythm
Litter box	Smaller temporarily	Standard size
Food type	Kitten-specific formula	Adult maintenance food
Supervision	Constant at first	Moderate
Preferences	Still forming	Already set
Adjustment time	Fast, chaotic	Slower but more readable
Tolerance for chaos	Moderate	Slower but more readable

WHAT TO BUY NOW

HAVE THESE BEFORE THEY ARRIVE. WITHOUT THEM, THE FIRST DAY IS HARDER THAN IT NEEDS TO BE.

- **LITTER BOX AND LITTER** – NON-NEGOTIABLE. CANNOT BE IMPROVISED.
- **FOOD AND WATER BOWLS** – WIDE AND SHALLOW. ALREADY PLACED BEFORE THEY WALK IN.
- **QUALITY WET FOOD** – ENOUGH FOR THE FIRST WEEK. NAMED PROTEIN, NOT DERIVATIVES.
- **SCRATCHING POST** – IN POSITION BEFORE THEY ARRIVE, NEAR THE FURNITURE YOU CARE ABOUT.
- **CARRIER** – ALREADY OUT AND OPEN, WITH SOMETHING SOFT INSIDE IT.
- **BASIC TOYS** – ONE WAND TOY YOU OPERATE, ONE OR TWO OBJECTS THEY CAN BAT ALONE. NOT TWENTY THINGS IN A PILE.
- **HIDING SPOT** – A BOX WITH A HOLE CUT IN IT WORKS. A BLANKET DRAPED OVER A CHAIR WORKS. THEY NEED SOMEWHERE THAT IS DEFINITELY THEIRS BEFORE ANYTHING ELSE IS.

WHAT TO BUY LATER

HAVE THESE BEFORE THEY ARRIVE. WITHOUT THEM, THE FIRST DAY IS HARDER THAN IT NEEDS TO BE.

- **CAT TREE** — WATCH WHERE THEY WANT TO BE BEFORE YOU BUY ONE. HEIGHT PREFERENCE, SURFACE PREFERENCE, AND LOCATION PREFERENCE ALL VARY SIGNIFICANTLY. AN EXPENSIVE CAT TREE IN THE WRONG PLACE BECOMES EXPENSIVE DECOR.
- **WATER FOUNTAIN** — GENUINELY USEFUL FOR CATS WHO DO NOT DRINK ENOUGH. MOST CATS DO NOT DRINK ENOUGH. BUY IT AFTER YOU HAVE ESTABLISHED THEIR BASELINE, NOT BEFORE.
- **WINDOW PERCH** — ONCE YOU KNOW WHICH WINDOW THEY FAVOUR. THEY WILL TELL YOU WITHIN THE FIRST WEEK.
- **AUTOMATIC FEEDER** — USEFUL FOR BUSY SCHEDULES, BUT ESTABLISH THE EATING ROUTINE MANUALLY FIRST. KNOW WHAT A NORMAL MEAL LOOKS LIKE BEFORE YOU AUTOMATE IT.
- **PUZZLE FEEDERS** — EXCELLENT FOR BOREDOM AND ENRICHMENT, MOST USEFUL ONCE THEY ARE SETTLED AND YOU UNDERSTAND THEIR ENGAGEMENT STYLE.
- **EXTRA BEDS** — THEY WILL CHOOSE WHERE THEY SLEEP REGARDLESS OF WHAT YOU BUY. WAIT UNTIL THEY HAVE SHOWN YOU THEIR PREFERENCES AND THEN PROVIDE SOMETHING GOOD IN THOSE SPOTS.
- **PET TRACKER** — WORTH HAVING, PARTICULARLY FOR OUTDOOR CATS. NOT URGENT FOR THE FIRST WEEKS WHEN THEY SHOULD BE INSIDE ANYWAY.

THREE THINGS THAT MATTER MORE THAN ANYTHING ON THIS LIST

CONSISTENCY. THE SAME FEEDING TIME. THE SAME HANDLING STYLE. THE SAME RESPONSE TO BEHAVIOUR, GOOD AND BAD. CATS BUILD SECURITY THROUGH PREDICTABILITY. UNPREDICTABILITY IS STRESS.

PATIENCE WITH THE ADJUSTMENT. HIDING IS PROCESSING. SILENCE IS ASSESSMENT. WITHDRAWAL IS NOT REJECTION. GIVE THEM THE TIME TO DECIDE YOU ARE SAFE RATHER THAN CONVINCING THEM WITH PROXIMITY.

OBSERVATION. LOOK AT WHAT THEY DO BEFORE YOU DECIDE WHAT THEY NEED. WHERE DO THEY GO? WHAT DO THEY AVOID? WHAT DO THEY RETURN TO? YOUR CAT WILL TELL YOU WHAT WORKS IF YOU ARE PAYING ATTENTION.

CATS ADJUST FASTER THAN HUMANS. SET THE ENVIRONMENT RIGHT AND LET THEM LEAD.

Thank you

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