



## **ADOPTING YOUR RESCUE CAT**

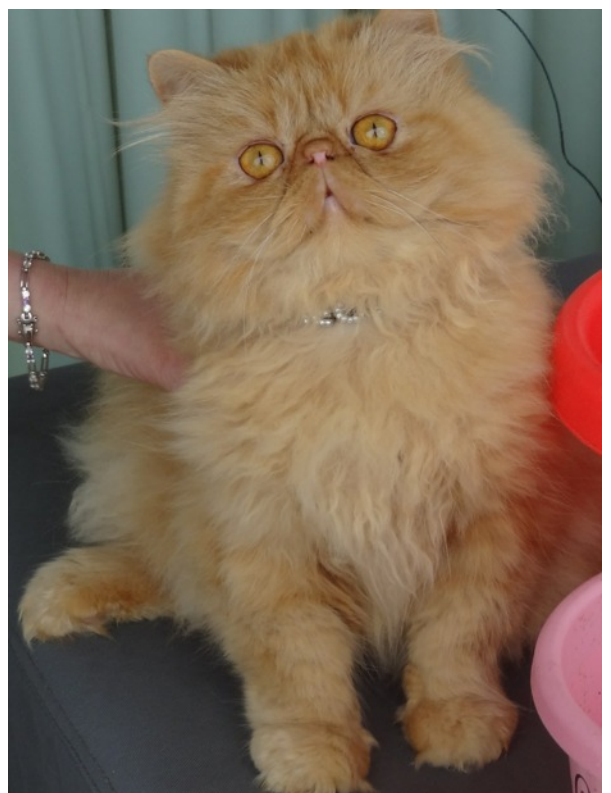
We are not vets or behaviourists, just volunteers who have been involved in rescue for some years. This is general advice. Any serious issues or concerns for health of your fur-baby must be taken to a vet for medical advice. This advice is not just for rescue cats, we assess cats we rehome and can give tailored advice, any cat needs consideration of it's bringing home etc.

## **RESCUE A CAT**

Adopting a rescue cat is a wonderful thing to do. Your new addition will bring fun and companionship into your life but, more importantly, you will be amazed at how quickly you fall completely in love with this little furry person. Most of the time your life together will be a breeze but, occasionally, you might have a problem or questions you would like answered which we hope we have addressed a few here. If you have adopted a Strawberry fur-baby we will know the cat to some degree and please email us for any concerns (but any medical issues please go to a vet – don't risk your fur-baby if it is poorly).

## **BRINGING YOUR NEW CAT HOME**

Ideally you should have a separate room set up for your new cat for its first week or so. We usually recommend a room with easy to clean flooring, as adopted cats can have more unsettled tummies than usual, as we would if you moved home, moved parents and family and belongings all in the one day – and you had not planned it yourself! "



The room can be a spare bedroom, kitchen or bathroom (only if large enough), with all windows firmly shut. Provide him/her with everything they need - food, water, litter trays, toys and a washable bed. Food and water should not be placed too close to the litter tray as many cats find this objectionable, but in big room do place it within 2 feet, as they find food easily and then can find litter tray too!

If you allow your new cat the run of your house in the first few days, they will get confused and might "powder their nose" in an inappropriate place. Once that has happened it can be difficult to break the habit. Much better to confine your new cat to a smaller space to begin with and then allow gradual exploration after a week of one or two slowly increased spaces.

If you have an extremely sensitive cat then you might need to make safe retreats for it by draping sheets over furniture to make a tent like atmosphere so that they feel safe. For the first few days your new cat might not want too much attention from you. This is completely normal (even for very, very affectionate cats) and the worst thing you can do at this stage is to force yourself upon him/her. Recognise that their life has changed significantly and they have undergone a huge upheaval.

If your new cat withdraws from you then try to spend quiet time with him or her, just sit in the same room not looking at them, just talking gently, encouraging play with rod toys and, most importantly, giving treats - fresh cooked chicken is usually a safe bet! Put down something tasty when you leave the room and your new cat will soon start to look forward to your visits and should begin to approach you for his treats when you enter the room.

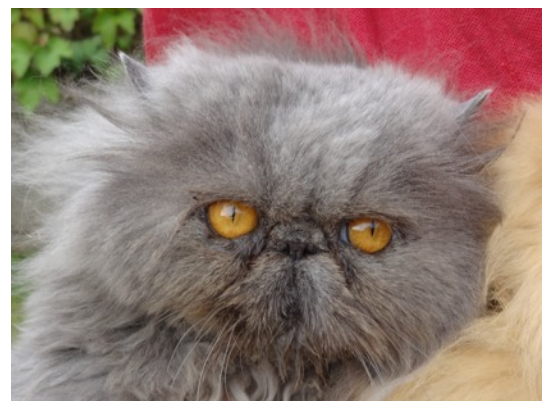


Blinking at a cat is a way of interacting with it - when they are content they should blink back, they take staring at another cat as aggressive, so do lots of eye blinkies and they will reply! I have just mentioned playing with rod toys. This is particularly important if you adopt a young cat. You don't want to encourage your cat to play with your hands - although it might seem cute when they are young and they grab your hands and kick at them with their back feet, trust me when I say you will not find it so cute when you have a 5kg adult cat doing it and if you have young children this behaviour is something you really want to avoid. Buy rod toys which you can dangle and swish around at a safe distance and your cat will learn that those are for playing with and your hands are not.

When you feel your new cat has settled well in its own room you can start to allow it to explore the next area of his/her new home. You should move the litter tray very gradually (a few feet at a time) to the place you want it to be situated eventually. It's not a good idea to move it in one go as your cat might become confused and start powdering its nose in the wrong place - much safer to do a gradual relocation.

## **INDOOR ONLY**

Many of our cats are rehomed as strictly indoor only. A safe pedigree cat happy and not experienced in outdoor access can be very happy and contented. It is not cruel to keep a cat indoors where it has never ever had any outdoor access - it has no knowledge of it and therefore cannot be deprived. Once you give outdoor access, some cats will not be happy if that is removed, some will adjust easily. Indoor only means that you can no longer leave either downstairs or upstairs windows open unattended and doors to the outside world can never be left open either. Many cats will happily dart out of an open door or even leap from an upstairs window if presented with the opportunity and if they are exclusively indoor only, as opposed to having supervised access, they will have absolutely no idea where home is.



If you have an existing cat flap you should make sure that it is completely blocked off. Locking it is not sufficient as cats can charge through them in an attempt to escape. If you have workmen coming to your house then your cat will need to be confined to one room they don't need to go into - we lock our cats in their safe room with fresh cooked chicken as they come out.

Before taking a cat who is to be allowed supervised access outdoors, then train them to have a harness maybe indoors – with treats or following toys with it on! ... Of course after they have settled in their new home for a good time, it is a good idea to use a harness so that you can walk your cat around the garden, ensuring that he/she can have a good sniff around without fear of them getting anxious and darting off. When you are confident that they know their surroundings then you can either ensure you are in the garden with them during outings or continue using the harness for walks. Never be too complacent and think that your cat is unlikely to dash off - it only takes a low flying bird to grab the cat's attention /loud bang and they could take off. Also consider that there are many unscrupulous people around who will look for an opportunity to steal your precious cat, many Strawberry cats look beautiful and they think they may think they could breed from them.

Even if your new cat is allowed free access to the great outdoors, it will be at least 2 -3 months with a pedigree cat (who can be slow learners) before that day comes and during this time please make sure that your windows and doors are kept firmly shut.

Any cat with any outdoor access needs to have a microchip and also a collar when outside – with a safe snap collar. On the collar put that the cat is largely indoor only and your address and contact number. If you choose to have a collar on a cat who is rarely outdoors or who is ill - put this on the tag. On our elderly and usually end of life cats we have adopted and stay with us – we use collars when we have visitors (just in case!) and have INDOOR only cat – urgently call us as on medication! And our phone number.

