# Introducing your new kitten to your home:

Kitten Care

Little Claws Maine Coon Cattery

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| Bringing your new kitten home for the first time is such an exciting time! While the transition can be a little scary for your baby, rest assured, kittens typically bond with their owners quickly. However, getting used to a new environment and other pets can take time, so be sure to help your kitten feel comfortable and safe.  For the first week we recommend keeping the kitten in an enclosed room. This helps them adjust to the new smells, sounds, and sights without feeling overwhelmed. If you’re not home, a room with no access to dangerous areas like cords, plants, or small items they might chew on is ideal. When letting our own kittens loose we will bring down a litter box and keep it close by. They are still babies, easily distracted, and may not remember the location of your litter box in time if they need to go. Gradually we move the litterbox to its normal location.  If you already have other pets, it’s important to introduce them to your new kitten gradually. Let your pets get used to each other’s scent through a closed door, allowing them to sniff and investigate without direct contact. If you have a dog keep it on a leash until you know how the dog will react to the kitten. This will also allow the kitten to approach your dog at its own pace. If you have another cat, try feeding them in the same area. This will help foster a sense of shared territory and make the adjustment period smoother. |  | |  | | --- | |  | | Making a new friend is the first step to feeling at home. | |  | | Slow introductions and plenty of patience are key. | |
| A cat standing on a couch  Description automatically generated |  | Saftey The old saying, “Curiosity killed the cat.” may have originated from experiences like ours with our kitten, Seven of Nine, who had two major accidents before reaching four months of age. Kittens are incredibly curious, and they love exploring every nook and cranny – often getting into trouble along the way. |
| **Power cords,**  **Essential Oils**  **Plants**  Here are a few safety tips to keep your kitten safe:  **Power cords**: Kittens love to chew on cords, so try to keep them out of reach or use protective covers.  **Essential oils & plants**: Many plants and essential oils are toxic to cats. Research which ones are safe before bringing them into your home.  **Training:** If your kitten starts chewing on things they shouldn’t give a sharp “NO” and gently redirect their attention. Repetition will help teach them what’s off limits. Some suggest using a spray bottle, however, by the time I get to the spray bottle it seems the cat has already moved on and most likely would have no idea why I was spraying them. |  | A cat sitting next to a plant  Description automatically generatedCuriosity may have killed the cat, but with a little training and kitten-proofing, we can keep them safe and sound! |
| A bag of cat food  Description automatically generatedWater Maine Coons are notorious water lovers! Whether it’s splashing in their water dish or dipping their paws in, expect some wet floors. To help manage the mess, try placing the water dish inside a larger container or use a large rubber mat beneath it. Maine Coons also enjoy drinking water from their paws, so be sure to change the water frequently – once or twice a day is ideal – to keep it fresh and clean. |  | Food Congratulations you now have a Maine Coon! Maine Coons are slow growers. They will continue to grow until three years of age. Because of their growth rate it is recommended to keep your kitten on kitten food until at least 18 months of age.  When transitioning your kitten to a new food, do so gradually. Mixing the new food with the old for 7-10 days will help prevent digestive upset. Start by offering 90-95% of the old food and just 5-10% of the new food. If your kitten does well, you can slowly increase the amount of new food each day.  A cat sitting on a blanket  Description automatically generated |
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# Coat Care

A hand holding a brush

Description automatically generatedMaine Coon fur is beautiful, but it does require regular care. There are two types of Maine Coon coats: one that’s straight and tangle-free, and the other that’s more cotton-like and prone to matting.

I recommend two types of brushes:

**Slicker Brush:** This brush is great for removing loose hair from the top of the coat. Keep this where you like to play with your cats or close to where you sit with them. Take turns brushing and letting them chew and play with the brush. They will enjoy trying to chew on the brush and playing with you while you give them a quick brush. Eventually, they will look forward to being brushed

**Dog Rake:** This brush is ideal for dealing with the undercoat, particularly during shedding season (spring and fall). It helps prevent matting and tangles, especially if your kitten has the cotton-like fur.

Flea and Tick medicine. Many flea and tic medicines now protect against parasites too. I highly recommend protecting your baby with one of these. Ask your vet for recommendations as some are age and weight restrictive.

When applying liquid flea and tic medication most directions say to place on the neck at the base of skull. In my own experience I go just a bit higher. You don’t want your kitten to be able to lick it. In addition, do not place it all in one spot. Part the hair in four of five spots to dot on to limit any skin irritation.

# Claw Care

For those of you who are considering declawing. I have learned it is possible to keep cats inside without declawing. I have two ladies who are just fine with monthly nail trimming and who use the scratching posts throughout our house. Then I have two boys who are not. I have to trim their nails about every 9-10 days and that seems to curb their drive to scratch. If your kitten is prone to scratching, direct them to a scratching post. With repetition, they **can** learn where to scratch.

Growing up we always declawed our cats’ front feet. I have never had a problem with any of our declawed cats as some state can happen. Many would go outside and still hunt and bring home prey to show us. I would offer some advice if you decide to declaw your cats. Some vets now offer a laser declaw surgery that is a better surgical method with less postoperative complications. Also, absolutely ask for prophylactic antibiotics after surgery.

If you’re not sure how to trim your kitten’s nails, ask a vet or groomer for advice. If you feel comfortable doing it yourself, here’s a simple technique:

**Have someone help:** One person can scruff the kitten gently while the other trims their nails.

**Do it solo:** If you’re alone, lay the kitten on its back, place your forearm gently across their chest, and use your other hand to hold the paw while you trim the claws with the hand with the arm holding the kitten down. If the kitten gets antsy, stop and grab them by their scruff until you see their legs draw up. This is the submissive response they give to their mom when she does this. I have found doing this a few times will quiet them down enough to do the trimming. Repeat until done.

# Polydactyl Claw Care

Maine Coons are famous for their polydactyl (extra-toed) paws, and while they’re adorable, they require extra attention. Some polydactyl can grow claws in between their toes, and their thumb nails can become thick and cause problems if not trimmed regularly.

Be sure to inspect your kitten’s paws often and trim any nails that may be growing in awkward directions or getting long. If you notice any issues with your kitten’s claws, don’t hesitate to consult your vet.

These are just some tips from my personal experiences. These are certainly not the only way to do things, but I hope you find them helpful.

With patience, care, and attention to detail, your new kitten will thrive in their new home. Every kitten is unique, so take the time to understand their needs and personality. Before you know it, your Maine Coon will be part of the family, and you’ll be enjoying all the love and joy they bring

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