

# Choosing the Right Cat

**You may have heard the saying, “You own a dog but you feed a cat.” It’s true that cats value their independence a bit more than their canine counterparts.**

**However, socialised cats crave and require love and companionship.**

Cats make wonderful pets and most will easily adjust to a variety of lifestyles and living spaces. As every cat is a true individual it is important to take the time to choose a feline companion that’s right for you. A cat’s personality, age, appearance and the types of pets already resident at your home are all things you should keep in mind when making your selection.

## **Shelter adoptions**

Stroll past a few cat cages at an animal shelter, you will notice that some cats “meow” for special attention, while others simply lie back and gaze at you with an air of superiority. There are as many different personalities of cats as there are cats in the shelter. You need to decide which personality is best for you?

Regardless of individual personality, look for a cat who is playful, active, alert, and comfortable while being held and stroked. Ask an attendant at the shelter for assistance if you wish to spend some time with individual cats. Bear in mind these cats are in an unfamiliar environment, some cats who are usually quite social, may be frightened or passive while in the animal shelter.

## **Kitten or Cat?**

As a general rule, kittens are curious, playful, and full of energy, while adult cats are more relaxed and less mischievous. Kittens require more time to train and feed although cats are only kittens for a few months. The age of the cat you adopt should really depend on the level

of maturity you’re looking for. Young children usually don’t have the maturity to handle kittens responsibly. A cat which is at least four months old is probably the best choice for homes with young children.

## **Short or Long-haired?**

Cats can have long, fluffy coats or short, dense fur. The choice between the two is chiefly a matter of preference, availability, and your willingness to devote time to regular grooming. Short-haired cats are the more popular and common. Long-haired cats require frequent grooming to maintain a mat-free coat. Some cats with short coats also require brushing. Most cats enjoy a regular brushing and will look forward to this daily ritual with you.

## **Room for one more**

If you already own a cat or dog, you’re probably wondering how easy it is to add a cat to the family. The good news is that cats can get along with other cats and—despite the common stereotype—most dogs can get along with cats. Introducing a new cat to a home with resident pets will require some patience on your part.

When adding a new cat to the home, provide time for a period of adjustment. You can do this effectively by isolating your new cat in a room of their own for a while.

After several days, supervise meetings between the animals for periods of increasing length. Most cats will soon learn to accept each other, and some may quite possibly become the best of buddies. Provide high, safe havens for the cat to escape i.e. tall cat scratching gym, shelves, window ledges. Some dogs simply won’t tolerate the presence of a cat, but by carefully introducing them, most problems can be solved.

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## **Be responsible!**

Regardless of the cat you choose, be a responsible cat owner. The most effective way to do that is to keep your cat indoors with you from the very beginning. If you do not let your feline friend outside, it will never miss it. Your cat will have a much better chance of still being around in a few years time if it is maintained as an inside cat.

Responsible cat ownership continues with having your female cat spayed or your male cat neutered. Spaying or neutering will ensure that your cat never adds to the millions of cats born each year which never find a good home. It will also reduce the likelihood of your cat wanting to stray and help him or her live a longer, healthier life.

The internet also provides useful resources for researching and creating a safe indoor/outdoor setting for your cat, with a variety of environmental stimulus ideas to keep your cat happy.

## **Choosing a cat for life**

You are making a commitment to love and care for your new pet for his or her lifetime—which could mean 10, 15, even 20 years. Choose your new companion carefully. Good Cats have Responsible Owners.

## **Useful Phone Numbers**

Complete and keep for future reference.

**Local Council** Business hours: \_\_\_\_\_

A/Hours contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Local Vet: \_\_\_\_\_

Animal Welfare League – 8348 1300

RSPCA Adelaide – 8231 6931  
(After Hours Emergency: 8202 8196)

RSPCA Lonsdale – 8382 9962

For more information, visit [www.GoodCatSA.com](http://www.GoodCatSA.com)