

Cat Bathing Takes Practice and Caution

Follow these tips to help your cat tolerate bathtime.

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Q. I would like to know if you can give a cat a bath, and if you can, how? (question submitted by first-grade student)

A. Giving a cat a bath can be very easy or very difficult, depending on the temperament of the cat. Remember that cats, unlike dogs, have five weapons: four sets of claws and teeth! Keep in mind that in general cats are very clean animals and rarely require bathing. Still, it's always good to be prepared to give your cat an occasional bath. I recommend that you get kittens used to water by simply giving them water baths, with no soap or shampoo. This should be done while they are growing up so that they get used to the idea of getting wet.

I start by putting my cat in a large sink and running the water next to it. Once your feline friend gets used to the sound of the water you should let him stand in it. Eventually, you will slowly work your way up to getting him completely wet. It is best to hold him gently by the scruff of the neck (that is what the mom does when she wants him to be good). This is like when your mom calls you by your full name you know that it is time to pay attention. Never scare you kitty during the bathing process, because your cat should realize that bath time is always a positive experience. It's also good to trim his nails before bathing to prevent severe scratches, in case he tries to grip onto you. I highly suggest that your parents help you with bath time. Good luck!