

## Cat Tips from Professional Cat Sitter Jeanne Adlon

**Watch for a new cat tip each week.**

*By Jeanne Adlon*

Give a shelter cat a good home this holiday season

When entertaining, be careful with food that drops on the floor. Most "people food" can make your kitty sick.

Petting is very therapeutic for your cat and good for their digestive system. Make sure you schedule some "pet time" each day.

Loud noises are stressful for kitties. Try to keep the volume at a reasonable level during holiday festivities.

Adding a little warm water to wet food makes a yummy gravy.

Check your floors regularly for small objects that you do not want your kitty to get in trouble with. It is not unusual for them to swallow needles, pins, rubber bands and more — all are dangerous.

Tossing a cat food treat across the floor will motivate a sedentary cat into getting a little exercise.

If your cat eats dry food only, please make sure there is plenty of fresh water available.

Make sure your kitty has a place to beat the summer heat and have plenty of cold fresh water available.

Try giving your cat catnip plants to prevent them from chewing on your house plants.

Consider the summer heat and make sure your kitty has a cool and cozy spot to snooze in.

A few ice cubes your cat's water bowl will help keep the water cool during the summer heat.

If your cat is under the weather and not eating as well as he should, try buying "smelly" canned food like tuna. Smell helps stimulate a cat's appetite.

Give your cats fresh water every day and please give the bowl a quick wash as well to prevent a film from forming.

Your cat will shed more and groom more in the warm weather so I suggest you start a weekly dose of hairball paste to help him out.

Try adding some water to your cat's canned food. It makes a yummy gravy.

To encourage a senior kitty to get some exercise, toss a small food treat across the floor for her to chase.

Do not give your cat mineral oil for any reason. It can be harmful. Please check any medications with your vet.

Now that spring is here, it's time to start thinking about flea control.

Putting some comfortable bedding in a cat carrier can help make the experience nicer for your kitty. Please remember to clean the bedding regularly.

Instead of just handing your kitty a food treat, toss it across the floor for some exercise.

If any of you are thinking about adding a new kitty to your household this year, please consider adopting from a shelter.

There are so many that need loving homes.

Don't forget to get a special gift for your special kitty this season. A little fresh catnip is a perfect holiday treat.

Please put string toys and feather toys out of reach when you are not home to supervise. You do not want your kitty to swallow string or feathers.

Please do not put new food on top of old food in your cat's dishes. Clean out the old food first.

If your cat's tail is very expressive and if it suddenly goes limp, this is not normal and I suggest you call your vet.

Please make sure all Thanksgiving holiday garbage is bagged and stored where your curious kitties cannot get to it. Turkey bones and cats don't mix.

To prevent cats from digging in your houseplants, cover the soil with crumpled aluminum foil.

At this time of year you will see your kitty's "winter coat" start to grow. Make sure you make time for extra brushing.

A fun Halloween costume for a young child is to take a close-up picture of your cat's face, print it out on heavyweight paper on the computer and make a mask out of it. Add a tail and leopard pjs and you are good to go!

Cats love running water. A pet water fountain, sold in pet stores, is a terrific way to encourage your kitty to drink more.

Store all your cat's medications in a safe place and away from children.

Keep your cat's nails trimmed. Check their length every week to 10 days.

Litterbox liners help keep your litterbox clean and control odors. Please make sure you wash out the box a week.

Cats spend a lot of time sleeping, so try to incorporate some interactive play into their schedule. It's a wonderful way to spend quality time together and great for your kitty.

Many senior cats suffer from arthritis and can find bending down to eat painful. Try elevated food bowl holders, found in pet stores.

To make litter box clean up easier, leave a small brush and pan by the box, along with the scooper.

Please flush dental floss down toilet. If left in a bathroom basket, curious kitties can swallow it, causing major intestinal problems.

In the hot summer months please keep screened windows open to let in air and shades down to keep the hot sun out. Your kitty will thank you.

I always recommend putting wet food and dry food in separate bowls. Wet food spoils much quicker, especially in the summer and will spoil the dry as well if mixed together.

Never leave your cat unattended in a car — not even for a few minutes. This is especially true in the summer when temperatures can quickly make the car interior an oven.

Do not let your frisky kitty chase bees, hornets, yellow jackets or wasps — they will sting when threatened.

When adopting, consider two cats. They will have each other for companionship, and can more easily adjust to their new surroundings.

Summer is a good time to grow some kitty grass, sold in local pet stores. My cats love it.

For cooling off kitties on hot and humid days, try a gentle mist of cool water from a plant mister.

To rejuvenate old catnip toys, dip them in hot water, wring them out and dry them. This seems to revive the scent and saves you the cost of purchasing new ones.

Check the label on your cat food cans. The first ingredient is the main ingredient.

To help save your furniture, clip your cats nails regularly.

In case your cat should ever escape your house and go outside, please make sure he or she is spayed or neutered, has an ID tag, is microchipped and has been treated for fleas and ticks.

If you are doing any construction in the home, please check the floors for dropped nails, dirt, drying paint and garbage that could be harmful to your cats before you allow them back into the area.

Pipe cleaners make some of the best cat toys. They are inexpensive and can be found in most craft stores.

Instead of buying lint brushes or special rollers to remove cat hair from furniture, try a damp sponge, which works just as well.

As spring approaches, it's time again to think about fleas. Some people have success preventing fleas by sprinkling a little brewers yeast in their cat's food. Check with your local pet store or vet.

As the weather gets warmer, now is the time to make sure your window screens are in good condition and firmly secured.

Cats do not come equipped with parachutes!

As spring approaches, it's time again to think about fleas. Some people have success preventing fleas by sprinkling a little brewers yeast in their cat's food. Check with your local pet store or vet.

Your cat's skin is very thin so if you want to remove hair mats, do not use scissors or other sharp objects. Instead, buy special clippers sold at pet stores.

Please make time to brush your cats daily, especially in the winter. It will help with their grooming and cut down on dandruff. Put leftover canned cat food in a plastic container in the fridge. It will last longer than keeping it in the can.

If your cat has chronic bad breath, please take him to the vet. He could have a medical condition that needs treatment. After coming home from a trip, ask the person caring for your cat for a report of how everything went, including eating, drinking and bathroom habits. This way you can be alerted to any potential problems.

To prevent cats from digging in plant pots, cover the soil with crumpled aluminum foil. You may notice your cat drinking more in the winter, especially if your home has dry heat. Always keep plenty of fresh water out for your cats and clean the dishes regularly.

If you use chemicals in your toilet, please keep the lid closed. They can be very harmful to your kitties. During the winter months, turn on a humidifier when you are home to keep the air moist. This will help prevent your cat's skin from drying out.

Do not leave lighted candles unattended. You don't want your cat to get close enough to singe her whiskers or knock candles over.

If you have a laser cat toy, be very certain never to direct it toward your cat's face or eyes.

Do not leave cat toys with strings hanging from doorways or door knobs when you are not home. Cats could easily get into serious trouble.

A fish tank with a very secure lid can provide first-class viewing for a bored kitty.

If you have cats in your home, please make provisions for them in case something should happen and you are unable to care for them.

If your vet has asked you to monitor how much your kitty is urinating (which happens with many senior cats) switch from clay to clump litter.

Cat carriers with wheels on the bottom are easier to carry a very large cat in, but he will be tilted in transport and the wheels can be noisy. Make sure he has treats and comfortable bedding inside.

When you adopt a new cat, feed her the diet she has been used to and then gradually add her new food to the bowl. This should make for an easy culinary transition.

When changing litter, thoroughly wash out your cat's litterbox before adding new litter.

For cats that like to scratch on the ground, rather than stretch up on a vertical scratching post, there are inexpensive horizontal scratchers made from corrugated cardboard.

Some cats are attracted to used dental floss, which is not good for them to ingest. Throw it in the toilet or a covered garbage can.

If your cat is curious about water, please keep the toilet lid down, especially if you have kittens,

which can fall in.

Keep your cats' feeding bowls away from their litterboxes. Kitties prefer a separate area for dining.  
If a guest is coming to visit you and they are allergic to cats, vacuuming on the day of arrival can stir up the dander in the air. I suggest vacuuming two to three days in advance.

If you are looking to adopt a cat, try your local rescue groups who are compassionate and passionate about finding permanent homes for animals. Ask your local veterinarian, at your local pet store or check online to find them.  
Providing a pet bed for your kitty is a wonderful way to create a space that she can call her own for snoozing and comfort.

When new pet and an existing pet are learning to co-habitate and both are behaving well, give each a treat and lots of praise. Positive reinforcement goes a long way.  
If you have a deaf cat never let him outdoors. To him, it could become a dangerous and frightening world. He is much safer inside with you.

Be sure to thoroughly clean your cat's water bowls daily, particularly during the hot months of the year, and make sure she has plenty of fresh water to drink.  
If your sweet, friendly cat suddenly becomes aggressive, she might be sick or in pain. Please take her to the vet right away to determine if she has any medical issues.

It is important to clip a senior cats' nails often. Their nails seem to grow longer and could get caught in fabric and rugs and perhaps twist a leg. Remember to clip all four paws, please.  
Summertime can mean fireworks and though we may enjoy them, our cats do not. During a neighborhood fireworks display, I suggest putting your cats in a quiet room with all their essentials (food, water, litter, toys) with the door closed and the blinds down for the duration.

Try to make time each day for some interactive play with your indoor cat. It will help her get the exercise she needs and be a fun activity for both of you.  
If you think your cat isn't drinking enough water, try adding some water to her wet food, making delicious gravy for her to lap up.

It is a good time of year to be certain that your window screens have no damage and are secured. As I always say, cats do not come equipped with parachutes!  
To help with litterbox odor, sprinkle a thin layer of baking soda on the bottom of the pan, then pour the litter on top of it.

If your cat only eats dry food, make sure plenty of water is available. You may also want to treat him to a specially made pet water fountain sold in pet stores. Cats like drinking from running water.  
When storing dry food, make sure you either use up the old food before opening a new package, or mix up the new and old in a storage container. You don't want old, uneaten dry food to sit indefinitely at the bottom of a container.

When your vet prescribes medication, ask if it can be flavored to taste like tuna or chicken. It will be more palatable for your kitties.  
If your kitty wears a flea collar, make sure it is not too close to the skin because it can cause irritations. Also remember to remove the excess portion of the collar after measuring the right size for your cat.

If company is coming and you don't have time for a major cleanup, using a 9.6-volt hand-held vacuum on furniture and

carpet is great for fast cat-hair pickup.

If you are buying new furniture or reupholstering old, use a fabric-protection product on it. Kitty messes do not cause as much damage that way.

Do not throw used dental floss in the bathroom waste basket. Place it in a covered garbage can. Once used, floss is attractive to cats and they might swallow it.

If you use an expensive brand of cat litter, try mixing it with a less expensive brand to save money — about 2/3 to 1/3. Chances are your kitty won't notice, but your wallet will.

It is important for senior cats to be brushed daily. This helps rid them of loose hair that can be ingested and become internal hairballs.

Before letting your cat loose in a new home, make sure you have checked it thoroughly to ensure that it is safe for him, and that there are no unwelcome escape routes.

Periodically clean out your cat carrier, particularly if it has bedding. Carriers can accumulate a lot of hair because cats shed more when nervous, and there is sometimes the occasional bathroom accident to attend to.

Keep some catnip near where you store your cat carrier. If you ever need to coax him inside, particularly in an emergency, it can help.

If your cat goes outside, be considerate of our feathered friends and add a small bell to her breakaway collar. Consider sending Valentine's Day cards to your friends' kitties. It's a fun way to celebrate the holiday.

It's the new year so please make sure any overweight kitties join you in a weight-loss program. Obesity in cats can lead to all sorts of trouble.

Check your floors regularly for small objects that you do not want your kitty to get in trouble with. It is not unusual for them to swallow needles, pins, rubber bands and more — all are dangerous.

Sadly, many cats are being given to shelters because their owners feel they can no longer care for them in these tough economic times. If you have a single-cat household, consider adopting a feline friend from a shelter.

If you host a New Year's party, put your cat in a separate room with all her essentials and try leaving on soft, soothing music on low for her.

Chasing the light from flashlights and penlights is a fun game for cats, but be very careful with laser cat toys. You do not want to point the laser light at your cat's face or eyes.

Remember to wipe your floors after you come in from the cold. You don't want your cats licking rock salt or other chemicals used during the winter months.

Never leave lit candles or votives unattended. Cats can easily tip them over or burn themselves.

If you have trouble getting your cat into a carrier to visit the vet, you may be able to find a vet who makes house calls. I have noticed that this service is becoming more common.

If you have smokers visiting your house, make sure you clean out your ashtrays, as tobacco is harmful to kitties. A good way to remove cat hair from furniture is to use a damp sponge.

Don't throw used dental floss in an area where your cat might find it. Swallowing dental floss may cause major problems. As winter approaches and we have less daylight, put a nightlight on a timer for your kitty.

When you change your kitty's water bowl, give it a good wash as well. Cleaner is better as far as their food and water bowls go.

For interactive play with your kitty that will not wear you out, try a laser toy. My cats love them and I can relax in my favorite chair while doing it.

Be sure to seal dry food bags tightly. If possible, keep them in a covered container or even in the refrigerator. Open bags attract bugs and can spoil.

Try not to leave out a large amount of wet food when you are going out for the day. Cats do not want to eat old and crusty food any more than we do. Consider giving smaller portions several times a day.

If you have kittens, check all closets, the refrigerator, washer, dryer, dishwasher, reclining chair and dresser drawers before closing them. Also make sure the toilet seat is down and the lid closed. Kittens are very fast and can end up in the wrong places quickly.

Food treats are fun for cats but instead of just handing treats to them, toss a few across the room. This way they get some exercise.

Take leftover canned cat food out of the can, and place it into a plastic container in the refrigerator. It will keep better.

A plastic mat under the entrance to the litter pan helps catch the occasional accident and keeps the area cleaner. Keeping a small dust pan and brush nearby also is a good idea.

Help your cat beat the summer heat by putting ice cubes in the water dish.

Do not throw out old catnip toys. They can be rejuvenated by soaking in hot water for a few minutes. Squeeze the water out, and give the toy to your cat while it's still damp. Make sure it is warm or cool, but not hot.

Always read the label on your cat's medication to determine whether it should be stored in the refrigerator. Some medications can go bad if left out and could make your cat feel worse.

Keep catnip in the refrigerator. It lasts much longer, and your cats will enjoy it more.

When you use a cat sitter, leave an extra set of keys with a neighbor or friend just in case they are needed.

Cats love moving water. That's why you will sometimes find them up on the sink drinking out of a dripping faucet. To get them off your countertop but also give them a chance to enjoy fresh, circulating water during the summer, try a cat water fountain, which should be available at your local pet store.

Leave a recently worn article of clothing near your cat's favorite spot. Your scent will comfort him while you are away.

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