

## Kitten Ownership From A to Z

**Let this alphabetical list guide you through the process of acquiring and caring for a new kitten.**

*Sandy Meyer*

Posted: Thu Mar 4 00:00:00 PST 2004

**S - Safety first**Kitten-proof the areas of your home in which your kitten will be allowed access. The best way to do this is to get on your hands and knees and look at your home from your kitten's perspective. Do you see dangling cords or plants that would be fun for your kitten to chew or pull on? Is there a small crevice in which your kitten could get stuck? Are there breakable items out that your kitten could knock over? Do you have poisonous substances within your kitten's access? Be proactive and you can enjoy an emergency-free kittenhood.

**T - Training**The key to training your kitten is consistency and positive reinforcement. Treats and affection make great training aids. One of the first "tricks" you should teach your kitten is to come when called. This comes in handy when you need to find your pet. Every time your kitten comes to you when you call its name, praise it and/or give it a small treat. Another important lesson is appropriate scratching surfaces. Place a small treat on a scratching post to entice your kitten and rub the post with your fingers. If that doesn't work, gently rub your kitten's paws on the post. Whenever your pet scratches on the post, praise it and/or give it a treat. It will quickly learn that using the scratching post is a rewarding experience.

**U - Unconditional love**Your new kitten needs your unconditional love, especially during its adjustment period. Never yell at or hit your kitten. Welcome its affection and learn to appreciate its unique personality.

**V - Veterinary care**Take your kitten to the veterinarian as soon as possible to make sure it is healthy. If you don't already have a veterinarian, speak with other pet owners for recommendations and call several clinics in your area. Your pet needs annual checkups, even if it seems fine. Don't hesitate to contact your veterinarian with any questions or to describe a change in your kitten's behavior.

**W - Wild behavior**Kittens are known for wild behavior. While you're sitting on your sofa relaxing, you might see your tiny friend jump up and race from room to room. Sometimes your kitten will bat and play with the air. Or perhaps your pet chooses to stare at the wall. Your kitten is not crazy. Sometimes they can see or hear things humans miss, such as the light hitting the floor in a certain way, a critter in the wall or a floating fluff of dust. Or, perhaps your kitten is just releasing some pent-up energy.