

BEHAVIOUR TIPS FOR NEW KITTEN OWNERS

USING THE LITTER BOX

- Confine the kitten to a small area (ex. Small bathroom or laundry room) with its litterbox whenever it cannot be closely supervised, until the kitten is consistent in using the litterbox for eliminating.
- Place the box in an area that is easily accessible, but provides some privacy. Also ensure that there are no scary noises or that the cat is not hesitant to enter this area.
- Provide at least two boxes if you have more than one cat.
- Scoop the box every day and completely clean the litterbox at least once a week.
- Do not use strong smelling detergents or disinfectants to clean the box, as they may deter the cat from using it.
- When the cat is using the litterbox do not disturb them or do anything disagreeable to them (ie punish them, give them medications, scold them, etc.).
- If you must change the brand of litter, please do this gradually over a 5 day period. This will allow the cat to adjust to the new feel and odor of the litter.
- NEVER rub the cats nose in urine or stool if it misses the box or has an accident. You must catch the cat in the act to punish or correct them. Scolding after the fact does not train the pet in any way, and may even hinder housetraining.
- Neuter your cat as soon as it reaches 6 months of age.
- Please do not hesitate to call at the first sign of housesoiling or if your having trouble training your new kitten. Long term problems can be more difficult to correct. (Southside Animal Clinic 649-1900).

DESTRUCTIVE SCRATCHING

- Provide the kitten with a scratching post in an easily accessible area.
 - ENSURE that the scratching post is sturdy.
 - If the kitten resists the post at first try sprinkling it with cat nip
 - REWARD the kitten immediately whenever the kitten uses the post (ex. Praise, food reward, etc)
 - You may need to try different types of surfaces (ex. Wood, rope, carpet, fabric, etc) to find the kittens preference.
- Closely supervise the kitten and punish unacceptable scratching by squirting it with a water gun or scaring it by making a loud noise. NEVER hit the kitten.
- When the kitten cannot be supervised, confine it to a room where only acceptable scratching surfaces are present. Ensure that the scratching post is also in this confinement area.
- Booby trap furniture you do not want scratched. You can pin or tape balloons to the sides of furniture, spray the kitten with a water bottle when it begins to scratch, or place aluminum foil on the surface of the furniture to scare the kitten when it begins to scratch.

CHEWING ON PLANTS

This is a hard behavior to correct. That is why it is important to try to train your kitten at the youngest age possible. It is also important to be aware that many houseplants are poisonous to pets, therefore preventing them from chewing on them is not only beneficial to your home decor, but also to their health.

- Mist the plants with water, then sprinkle cayenne on the leaves, or you can purchase bitter apple spray for plants. Therefore when the kitten begins to chew they get an awful taste in their mouth, preventing them from returning to that plant again.

PLAYBITING

Every kitten is extremely playful, and the act of biting is one method of play. However when the kitten begins to bite your hand or ankles it can become extremely irritating, as well as painful.

- NEVER encourage attacks towards your hands. Use a toy, stuffed animal or ball.
- Direct attack play behaviors towards thrown toys (ex. Ping pong balls, a ball of aluminum foil, etc).
- Redirect any play biting from your hand or ankle to the kittens favorite toy.
- NEVER hit the kitten with your hand or foot. This may encourage the kitten to attack.
- If kitten is biting you, you can try making a hissing sound to discourage this behavior.