

## Kitten Gear Checklist

- Bowls for food and water.** I recommend stainless steel or ceramic. Plastic bowls can cause chin acne, which can be a nasty condition to treat. I also recommend a water fountain as this does encourage pets to drink. For cats, get a fountain with a gentle stream that has areas where the cat can drink from the bowl or from water flowing over a surface.
- Food.** We feed our kittens canned and dry food, so they will be weaned on both. We use Royal Canin cat food that's available from pet stores or a vet. We don't feed raw or freeze dried food. We've tried them, but our cats don't like them.
- Litter box.** You'll need one litter box for each cat, plus one. So if you have one cat, you'll need two litter boxes, two cats, three boxes and so on. Cats naturally cover up their waste and they need enough room to do that. Would you want to step in or shovel through your own waste? Your cat doesn't either. If you want to use a covered litter box, I advise getting one covered and one uncovered. Some cats don't like covered litter boxes.
- Cat litter.** Clumping clay litter is the best. It's easy to clean and it absorbs odours if the cat covers up after himself, which he will typically do if he can. Do NOT get scented litter. A cat's nose is more sensitive than yours and the scent is too strong. Besides, what's a bit of scent going to do? Trust me, it doesn't help. We use Odour Buster.
- Litter scoop.** You should scoop out the waste every couple of days, or at least once a week, if the box doesn't get too full. I use a kitchen compost bin with a charcoal filter and a bag liner for the dirty litter, then it goes in the "green" bin once a week, which is part of our waste collection services.
- Bed and pads.** Your cat may not use the bed, but you should have one available just in case they do. I find that they do choose to sleep in the bed periodically. I also have catnip-filled mats or pads. These have a bit of foam fill and you can refresh the catnip in them. You can also throw them in the wash. Once again, my cats like to use them periodically. Ada in particular likes to sleep on the pads. The beds are washable as well, which is important.
- Scratching posts.** We have several scratching posts, some sisal, and some cardboard. Their favourite scratching posts are the ones that sit upright on a stand. A tall post lets them scratch and stretch, which they really like. I recommend not getting a carpet scratching post. These can cause confusion because your cat can't distinguish from your floor carpets or furniture and their scratching post. Spreading catnip or using a catnip spray on the post can encourage your cat to use it.
- Cat furniture (trees).** Your cat will want to climb and observe proceedings from a perch up high, so give her a cat tree. Cat trees also provide another place to scratch and nice places to sleep. Unfortunately most trees are covered in carpet. Try to find a tree covered in sisal and fuzzy fabric so they don't scratch your furniture or floor carpets.

- ❑ **Toys and more toys.** Cats need to play and hunt and toys serve that purpose. Give your cat a variety of toys. When she tires of a particular toy, put it in a box on the floor. We put all our cats' toys in a box on the floor and they will go to the box and dig out the toy they want to play with. They will carry their toys in their mouths and drop them in a spot that they have to work to dig it out again. Ultimately toys will wind up under furniture and we'll have to dig them out. Also if you don't give your British Shorthair a toy to play with, he will find something else to play with. Brits are smart and inquisitive.
- ❑ **Interactive toys.** These are the wands you see in pet stores decorated with feathers, tinsel and string. Some are wands with cords and a fly, feathers or mouse on the end of the cord. Your cat will love these interactive play sessions and they are great for giving your cat lots of exercise. Don't leave these toys laying around because they will get chewed up pretty quickly and your cat could swallow dangerous parts.
- ❑ **Travel carrier.** You'll need a carrier to pick up your kitten. You'll also need one for vet trips and possibly other trips. I advise getting a soft-side carrier for local trips to the vet or car trips. If you're going to be travelling longer distances with your cat, especially on a plane, then check the regulations to make sure the carrier meets them. If your cat has to travel in the cargo hold, then you'll need a hard shell carrier. Just remember that the little carrier that worked for your kitten won't suffice for your full-grown cat, especially if you get a male.
- ❑ **Treats.** Everybody likes dessert every once in while and cats are no exception. Dental treats also help with taking care of your cat's teeth. Cats are trainable, especially if a treat is involved.
- ❑ **Grooming brush and comb.** I use a slicker brush and coarse toothed comb. A slicker brush is a fine wire brush with curved pins. A combination comb with medium and coarse teeth is an excellent option. A British Shorthair's coat is dense and thick so I don't recommend a fine toothed comb.
- ❑ **Nail clippers.** I recommend getting the scissor style nail clippers. If you've never clipped a cat's claws, you may want to ask your vet to show you or we can show you when you pick up your kitten. We will have clipped our kittens' claws several times before they are sold. You may still want a helper because they do get impatient and may start pulling away.
- ❑ **Leash and harness.** These are certainly optional, but you may find your kitten likes to walk on a leash. If you want to try this, remember that cats aren't like dogs. They will be taking you for a walk, not the other way around! Start by putting the harness on your cat and letting him wear it inside for a while. Once he's walking around with the harness on, try taking him outside. Let him explore and walk where he wants. If he wants to go onto the road, stop and say "no". Just hold the lead, don't pull it. Eventually he'll get the idea and you'll be walking, or trotting along.
- ❑ **Laser Toys.** If you choose to use a laser toy, give your cat something to catch. Cats are hunters and while they are used to chasing prey and it escaping, laser toys will cause

frustration if you don't give your cat a reward in the form of a toy that they can catch. I believe there are some laser toys in the form of a mouse, but I have never used that kind. When I use a laser, I move it around the floor getting my cats to chase it. After a few minutes, I finish by pointing the laser at one of their toys so they can pounce on it. No matter which kind you get, do NOT leave the toy for the cat to play with on his own. Lasers can be dangerous.

## Other Items You May Need

- ❑ **Anxiety relief.** Feliway is a synthetic copy of the facial pheromone that cats use to mark their territory as safe and secure. It comes in various formats: plug-in diffuser, spray and wipes. The wipes are good for wiping down the inside of the travel carrier before you put your cat in it. You can also use the spray, but wait a few minutes before putting your cat inside. You can use the diffuser in a room in your house to calm your cat and help them adjust to their new home. This is not a requirement, but if you find your cat misbehaving, discuss their behaviour with your vet. If your cat's behaviour isn't due to a medical issue, your vet will probably recommend Feliway.
- ❑ **Dental care.** We use dry food and find that's usually good enough to take care of our cats' teeth. However if your cat does have gingivitis or you want to be proactive in preventing it, then you can buy dental food or even a toothbrush and toothpaste to brush your cat's teeth. Surprisingly many cats like dental food as a treat. Dental food is a special formula with large chunks. I recommend Royal Canin Oral Care. Once again, I would talk to a vet and get their recommendation.
- ❑ **Hairball remedies.** If you find your cat coughing up hairballs, then you'll need a product like Laxotone. I prefer to buy a product from my vet.
- ❑ **Flea and tick care.** We use Revolution which we buy from our vet. It's a requirement for all cat show participants and it's a good preventative measure.

