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## *Living With Your New Kitten*

*To keep your kitten from chewing and scratching your house to pieces, you must meet their need for adventure. Kittens are naturally curious and need an appropriate space, such as a play center, where they can climb, rest and scratch to their heart's content. You should also provide toys for your kitten to bat around; spring-mounted, dangling or bouncy toys are best.*

*The first lesson to learn in teaching a kitten to be a good roommate is to understand that their brains are wired differently than a dogs'. Dogs are pack animals; being constantly social is in their genes. In the wild, a dog's survival can depend in part on whether they are in the good graces of the members of their pack. Wild cats, on the other hand, are generally solitary hunters, having evolved to take care of themselves. Cats don't have as much invested in earning your approval and keeping you happy all the time, but you can teach your cat to be a pleasant roommate.*

*Claw sharpening is a normal cat behavior, though this may be hard to recall right after your kitty gouges your antique dining room table. Scratching is your kitten's way of leaving his mark, conditioning his claws and stretching. You can teach him to scratch the right things, however, by providing a scratching post.*

*A scratching post is vital in getting your pet's behavior under control. You may want to buy several and strategically place them throughout your home. Make the posts as attractive as possible. Rub them with catnip, attach toys for him to attack, or place other play things around the post to give him plenty of stimulation. You might want to place a post in a prominent place since he may also be using scratching to claim his territory.*

*As you are teaching your kitten to use his scratching post, give him exactly what he craves. Give him lots of love and cooing praise, or if your kitty is the kind that only wants petting when he's in the mood, try a treat. If you catch him scratching*

something else, don't yell or threaten him. Instead, distract him by clapping your hands and then move him to the nicer-smelling, more attractive scratching post and scratch it a little with your fingertips to give him the right idea. If your kitty persists scratching on undesired surfaces you may place double stick tape on the areas that you want to protect.

Nothing compares to the sight of your kitten perched regally on top of the kitchen counter, master of all he sees. Tabletops, counters, mantles, and bookshelves are ideal for cats, allowing them to keep a close eye on everything. So how do you keep your feline's feet on the ground?

Utilizing the double stick tape for training is easy. (Adhere the double stick tape to paper towels if you don't care to stick tape to your tables or counter tops. Roll the paper towels out the length of the area that needs to be protected, place a strip the length of the towel on each edge and down the middle, making a sticky scat-mat. The tape covered paper towels can be moved around as needed. When he encounters the tape the first time he will make a quick exit and take everything with him so remove breakable items he may encounter until he is trained.)

Cats don't like it when their paws stick to things, so they will experience something unpleasant every time they jump up, whether or not you're in the room. Eventually they'll decide that the counter, mantle, dining room table, etc. is not where they want to be. If your kitty's a born climber, you could offer him an alternative by purchasing him a tall cat tree or a cat perch that attaches to a windowsill. Rubbing it or spraying it with oh-so-tempting catnip can encourage him to use it.

Many kittens spend the day sleeping while you are at work. In the evening channel your kitten's energy into playtime as well as enjoying snuggle time. A kitten that is kept active with games or chasing toys is much less likely to get into mischief in the middle of the night. The best way to deter midnight play is to ignore it. If you cannot, confine him to a room with his food, water, litter pan, and lots of toys.

*Helpful Hint:* You are cuddling your cat and he's purring away like a motor boat, when suddenly he chomps down on your hand. What did you do wrong? Actually, he was becoming over stimulated. Tell him no in a calm voice, move your hand away, then try petting him for shorter periods of time. If he still nips at you withdraw the stimulus completely and do not pay any more attention to him. He'll learn that, if he wants attention, biting is a no-no.