

The Perfect Cat

FOR YOUR LIFE STAGE

Where you are in life is an important consideration when adopting a cat. Here's how to make the best choice.

..... by **RITA REIMERS**

Choosing the right kitty isn't as simple as picking out the most adorable whisker face you can find. Consider how your lifestyle is able to meet the needs of your chosen feline pal. It's not as much your age but your stage in life that plays a role in deciding what type and age of cat is the best fit for you.

Single professional

Are you on your own, trying to make your mark in the world and focused on your career? If you're away from home for many hours at a time, a kitten or a high-maintenance breed like a Bengal, Ragdoll or Persian might not be the right cat for you.





Best breeds for...



PEOPLE WHO HAVE LOTS OF TIME. Breeds that thrive on love and attention include:

Burmese
Cornish and Devon Rex
Egyptian Mau
Persian
Ragdoll
< Sphynx
Tonkinese

PEOPLE WHO ARE ON THE GO.

Breeds that are independent include:

American Wirehair
British Shorthair
Manx
Norwegian Forest Cat
Russian Blue
Scottish Fold >
Somali



FAMILIES WITH OTHER PETS AND KIDS. Breeds that are active and outgoing include:

Abyssinian
< Bengal
Birman
Japanese Bobtail
Maine Coon
Siamese
Siberian



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A young adult cat (who has already been socialized and through her wild and crazy kittenhood) of a lower-maintenance breed is a smarter choice.

Of course, your adult cat will need plenty of places to nap, things to climb and stimulating toys to play with, too, so she won't get bored while home alone. A bonded kitty pair who can keep each other company might be the best fit for an on-the-go single person who might work late hours — and socialize late hours, too.

If you have young children

A home with babies or toddlers can be a wonderful environment for an easygoing older cat or for a young adult, gentle breed cat like a Maine Coon or Birman. Toddlers might be a little too aggressive to be around very young kittens, and parents of young children may be a little too occupied with the kids to give needy kittens the handling and socialization they need.

Older adult cats can also be good with younger children, as they tend to be calm and don't get stressed as easily as a very young cat. Older cats also tend to sleep quite a bit, and anyone looking on YouTube has seen plenty of cute babies and cats slumbering peacefully together.

If you have older children

Once the kids get older and can be taught how to handle them, kittens and young cats can be a great addition to today's modern family. My friend Linda and her family recently adopted their very first kitten, after

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previously adopting all adult cats. Everyone from Linda's husband to her teenage son is fascinated watching Paws and his tiny kitten antics, not to mention his rapid growth! Even their adult cats and dog are captivated by the tiny bundle of fluff.

Kittens can teach kids responsibility and how to take care of another living being, not to mention they are great fun to play with, too. Those more energetic breeds of any age like Maine Coons, Bengals and Siberians might also be a good choice as a family cat.

The cats are your kids

A kitten is a wonderful choice for someone established in his or her career who doesn't have kids at home or travel a lot. At this life stage, you have some good parenting, pet or just plain life experience, which will come in handy. Kittens need lots of supervision to keep them out of trouble, as well as plenty of love and handling to become loving, social creatures. They also need someone who has patience to spare as they explore their environment (and get into things, too!).

Adult cats from some of the more affection-needy breeds like the Sphynx, Cornish Rex or the Egyptian Mau are also perfect

for the single person or couple who has the time and love to devote to them. Senior cats may also be a good choice, since these cats may require closer observation in order to discover any medical issues that may come up as they age (and someone who can afford the vet bills).

Silver adults

For a retired senior adult, the best feline fit depends on the adult's lifestyle. There are very active seniors who spend a lot of time out of the house, traveling, doing community service or hobbies like golf, and they might not be a great fit for a kitten but rather an adult low-maintenance breed or two. An older, calmer kitty is great for someone who is more of a homebody looking for a cat to sit by his or her side keeping them company while they watch TV, or they might enjoy the extra energy that a tiny kitten brings.

Once you decide to bring a cat or kitten into your life, no matter what age or breed you choose, give her lots of love and attention, along with everything else she will need to live a long and happy life with you. 🐾

Devoting her entire life to cats, Rita Reimers is founding owner of JFCATS.com, a feline health and wellness company. JF CATS has been providing cat behavior services and cats-only pet-sitting for the last 15 years. Rita and her business partner, Linda Hall, are also starting a line of USA-made cat toys and bedding called Gracie & Esther. You can reach Rita directly on Facebook and Twitter @TheCatAnalyst and on Instagram @RitaReimersTheCatAnalyst.