

Blueberry Hill Persians

Welcome Kitty home prep checklist

If this is your first kitten you might use this list as a guide to outfitting your home with all the comforts your soon-to-be-pampered pet might need.

essentials

Litter box	We prefer the plain heavy plastic kind with no top or cover and advise against the mechanical & self-cleaning models. Reason? Cleaning the pan frequently is wise and the covered or 'gadgetry' types are easy to let go longer than they should be for the health of your cat. If your cat gets large you might want to choose a dog litter pan—they are usually sturdier, wider and less likely to be tipped over. Tip: when you find a model you like, get two. When the old one gets scratched up and begins to look dirty even when cleaned with soapy solution you can replace it without delay.
Litter	A matter of human and kitty personal choice. We mix our own from 3 different kinds: 90% Swheat Scoop (a natural wheat-based litter that has the advantage of being light-weight and not dusty), 5% crystals (I buy whatever brand is available and/or on sale) and 5% clumping (non-scented formulas.) Use whatever suits your budget. Sift frequently. Dump the whole box, clean & disinfect every few days. We use hot, soapy water followed by a dilution of household bleach & hot water. Tip: most cats dislike litters with heavy scents and most cats like litters with a chunky texture. Fill the box so the cat can dig a bit—they like that too.
Food & water bowls	Use stainless steel or ceramic and get two or three sets. Plastic can harbor bacteria if it gets scratched — cat chin acne can result. We like bowls that sit neatly in stands so the cats don't have to bend down too far. Persians' flat faces cause them to push a great deal of the food off of flat plates or shallow bowls—consider bowls with a medium deep well. Wash/provide newly cleaned bowls every day even if they look clean. Bacteria don't advertise. Water fountains are an option but beware: they are difficult to get really clean and mold can grow. Get one you can break down and put in your dishwasher. Tip: If your kitty likes soaking his ruff in his water you might want to use a bowl with a small circumference—big enough to get a nice drink but not wide enough to get his whole upper body wet (we have a few cats who seem to enjoy 'swimming' in the water bowl.)
Food	What you feed your cat is one of those 'taboo' topics like religion, politics and sex if you dare introduce it in the company of serious cat fanciers. Tempers flare and there are those who think that if you feed anything but raw meat to your cat you are a criminal while others insist that anything but a commercial cat food diet is risky. It is all up to you, your pocketbook and your cat. Blueberry Hill Persians are weaned to Wellness brand wet kitten food and Royal Canin Baby Cat dry. By the time the kittens are 14 weeks old they are eating a combination of that mixed with Iams kitten dry. I will send you off with a sample of this diet and if you want to get

your kitty used to a different diet use my sample mixed with your food and gradually increase the % of the food you want to feed. Occasionally, a change in diet may result in an upset tummy with diarrhea or constipation. If this happens you might want to try another food or make the change more gradually. If you choose commercial food, choose the best that you can afford and be sure to have the bulk of the diet be a kitten formula until your cat is around a year old. **TIP:** 'People food' and table scraps are bad for cats. Many foods that we enjoy can sicken or kill a cat. Chocolate, caffeinated foods and alcohol are examples. Milk will cause stomach distress in most cats. Comprehensive lists of such foods can be easily found online.

Scratching post or surface

Yes, this is an essential—if you value your rugs and furniture. Cats will scratch vertical surfaces and carpet. Train your kitten to choose the surface you provided for her rather than your possessions. Cats prefer uneven surfaces to smoother ones for this task. Sisal & Berber carpet scraps are good choices. You can make one yourself by adhering a scrap of these fabrics to a sturdy wood frame that stands on the floor or mount the scrap to a wall. Or, you can buy something ready made. There are a million choices in a million price ranges. The cat has no need to outdo its neighbors—no need to go wacky with a super kitty condo tower costing \$300 or more unless you like the way it looks with your family room décor. **TIP:** trim you cat's nails once a week or at least, every other week. Trim just above the quick.

Shampoos and Conditioners

You are now the proud owner of a walking dust collector. Regular grooming is a must unless you want your cat to resemble a reggae musician. Plan to bathe your pet twice a month for best, soft clean coat. Choose a good deep cleaning shampoo. We like Slasko shampoo, Pet Silk shampoos and #1 All Systems shampoos. Pet Silk and #1 All Systems make great conditioners too. Our favorite routine goes like this:

Step One: Gently tease out any tangles in coat before shampoo

Step Two: Rinse cat until coat is completely saturated with water

Step Three: Work in generous dollop of your favorite shampoo. (Our show cats get a pre-step of Goop Groomer's paste followed by diluted Dawn liquid.) Don't swirl fur and tangle coat when working in suds. Rinse well.

Step Four: Mix a dilute solution of #1 All Systems Product Stabilizer, Coat Retexturizer & Skin Refinisher—follow directions on bottle. Soak cat's coat for at least a minute and then rinse.

Step Five: Shampoo again. You might want to use a shampoo formulated for your cat's coat color. Both Pet Silk and #1 Systems make color-specific shampoos but many other manufacturers do too. Rinse really well.

Step Six: Condition. Dilute your favorite conditioner in water—we like to fill the sink basin with the mixture and soak the cat for up to 5 minutes. Rinse, rinse and rinse. Rinse again. (This is not a show bath, by the way.)

Step Seven: Remove excess water from fur by smoothing the coat down and gently pressing out the water. Wrap the kitty in a towel dried without fabric softener and hold her for at least 5 minutes to absorb as much water as possible.

Step Eight: Comb out tangles gently then blow dry completely. Viola! Pretty kitty! Ooh, La La!!

Grooming supplies : we like to keep our home grooming supplies in one of those portable make-up boxes with a handle on top. Target has some really nice ones.

Animal nail clipper—essential for keeping your sofa intact. Slicker brush—for quick touch ups. Discard when the pins get bent or seem loose. Comb—we like a comb called a ‘Greyhound’. The 7” x 1 ¼” Medium/Fine is a good choice. Buy the best one you can afford—this is one place to splurge on a quality instrument. #1 All Systems has a nice selection too. If you must choose from a pet store pick a model with a padded handle for your comfort. Small sharp scissors—for carefully cutting out mats or objects tangled in fur. This came in handy when my youngest was a toddler and thought our red tabby Persian would look better covered in Spiderman stickers. **Tip:** If your kitty gets really matted bring him to a professional groomer. Don’t try to tear out the mats as this can be really painful for the cat. Not only will he hurt he might not let you groom him again.

Clean eye supplies

Persians are apt to have leaky eyes—like some toy dogs do. The tears grow bacteria when they linger in the areas around the eye and nose break. Brownish stains result and these are difficult to remove unless the eye area is kept after. It’s easy to make eye cleaning a quick part of your daily grooming routine. Get yourself some cotton makeup pads—buy the largest size bag your supermarket or drug store sells—get several bags. We use both squares and rounds depending on what’s on the shelf. Buy bulk Q-Tips and a large size bottle of contact lens rewetting solution. We like Renu. Dampen a cotton pad with the Renu or use my recipe for Eye Wash (you can download this from the document page of our website.) Wipe in from the nose break to the corner of the eye and under it taking care not to get the solution in the eye itself. Wipe until the pad comes clean. Use as many pads as you need and don’t re-dip a dirty pad. Using a Q-Tip, gently pack the damp fur with Sterile Wound Powder (available at [www. Pandecats.com](http://www.Pandecats.com)) You can also use a pre-made solution and powder—many are available. We like Eye Envy but it can be expensive if you have several cats. **Tip:** Many cats enjoy the touching involved in this. Be gentle and your kitty will come to welcome eye-cleaning time! If you are unable to get to this for a time and your cat gets a hard, chunky buildup of matter, soak a face cloth in warm water and loosen the heavy material from his fur before you apply the eye wash solution. If the discharge from the eye looks greenish or like pus and/or if the eye rims are swollen and red or pink take your cat to the vet. He may have an eye infection and that will need to be treated with antibiotics.

Pet carrier

Louis Vuitton or plastic airline carrier? It’s up to you and how you plan to travel with your cat. Flying? Airlines have changed their policies and most now require specific sizes and configurations for in-cabin carries. Check with your airline. Car? You can go with almost anything but you might consider a carrier than can be strapped in like a baby seat. Handbag and backpack carriers range from designer bank-drainers to utilitarian satchels. We like the hard airline carriers for almost any trip and we have them in several sizes. We also use the Kittywalk pet stroller. The carrier basket detaches and the wheel assembly folds up for easy carrying and storage. Our rolling suitcase carrier with roll-up venting flaps is a staple of our show baggage. **Tip:** Something absorbent on the floor of your carrier is a must. Stow an extra towel or two, moist baby wipes, a few zipper lock baggies and a bottle of water in the carrier for any emergency or potty accident that might befall your traveling kitty.

Bedding	<p>While your bed or silk side chair might be his nap spot of choice you might try giving him his own place. Choose something that has a washable cover and filling that won't harbor insects or odor. We really like the cat mats that can be tossed whole into the washer and dryer. Put it in a spot with a view that is also protected in some way—corners are nice. Tip: If you have 6 cats get six sleeping mats or beds. Cats love a place of their own.</p>
Toys	<p>Get lots because the kitty will drive them into the household black hole within minutes of you removing them from the package. Little mice, things with tails, balls of all kinds, and feathery stuff on a stick, things that make noise are all kitty-cool. Catnip is fun but not all cats imbibe. The #1 cat toy in our house? An empty cardboard box. All my guys get excited when the UPS truck pulls up—they know that more empty boxes will follow. Tip: Forget balls of string unless emergency trips to the vet are your thing. String, thread & yarn can get stuck down a cat's throat very easily. If this happens to your cat—go to your animal emergency center immediately. Do not try to pull it out! If you sew, make sure you keep those needles with thread out of the cat's way. Ditto balloons and plastic wrappers. If you smoke make sure you discard cigarette filters and butts—the chemicals in the butts are deadly to cats.</p>
Vet	<p>Well, we aren't suggesting you keep one waiting in your home but find one and schedule an appointment for your new kitten within a week of bringing her home. Tip: get recommendations from friends who have cats. Ask about their experiences with the staff. Make sure that you can afford the practice's usual fees. Locate the closest emergency center and drive there at least once so you are not in danger of getting lost if an emergency does happen. Join a feline health email list—you can learn so much. fanciershealth@yahoogroups.com is a good one. Get a good book on cat care.</p>

Optional

Two good books to own are *The Cornell Book of Cats*, edited by Mordecai Siegal and published by Villard. And *The Cat Fanciers' Association Complete Cat Book* also edited by Mordecai Siegal, published by Harper Collins.

Resources

The following is a list of websites worth checking out and a few products that we like using.

Websites

www.pandEcats.com

This is a comprehensive website for Persian owners. It's a great resource for products, tips, problem-solving and interesting information about the breed.

www.cfainc.org

Your Blueberry Hill kitten was registered as part of a litter with the Cat Fanciers' Association. If you adopted a grown cat than he was registered with the CFA as an individual cat. This site is the official site of the CFA. On it you will find information about the breed, breed standards, shows & breeder referral. It has links to many valuable resources for owners of pedigreed cats.

www.petedge.com	Supplies, food
www.revivalanimal.com	Supplies, medications, hard-to-find pet care products
www.ez-groom.com	Great selection of grooming supplies and shampoos
www.mjmcompany.com	Pet silk and #1 All Systems conditioners and shampoos, grooming supplies
www.sturdibag.com	Carriers and enclosures. Their stuff is durable, cleanable and comfortable
www.trixieandpeanut.com	Silly and distinctive pet gifts, luxury items. You can find some of the coolest cat carriers on this site—and some of the most expensive.
www.ultraliteproducts.com	By far, the best animal enclosures on the web. We use their enclosures exclusively in our cattery.
www.zeroodorpet.com	This site offers our favorite product for eliminating pet odors.