

## Consider adopting adult cat

BY ROSE GATES / FOR THE SUN CHRONICLE  
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Congratulations on making the decision to adopt a cat from an animal shelter or rescue organization.

I am sure you've already put much thought into which color you like: calico or tabby. Maybe you have a preference for long hair or short? But, before you make your final choice, please consider giving a home to an adult cat.

Visit any local shelter or rescue organization and you will find many well-behaved, loveable adults just longing for a new home. Most people overlook the adults and naturally gravitate toward kittens because they are so small, fluffy and cute. The truth is all of those adorable little kittens will, in less than a year, be just as big as the adults.

If you have a certain personality type in mind, an adult cat is your best bet. They have already grown into their personalities, which they will have for the remainder of their lives. With good food and proper veterinary care, cats are now living into their late teens, so a cat that is only 4 or 5 years old still has many years of life and love left to give.

Some feel it is easier to "mold" kittens into a certain type of behavior or that they will be more affectionate. This is not always the case. Although kittens may be cute and easy going now, they could mature into a totally different kind of cat, and that little lap-kitten of yours could turn out to be a shy adult.

Another reason adopters choose a kitten is because they have a dog and they want to "raise" the kitten to be best friends with it. Some kittens are destined to be cats that don't get along well with dogs...or possibly other cats. However, many adult rescued cats have lived successfully with dogs and other cats in their previous or foster homes and are easily acclimated into a home with other pets.

If you are already the proud owner of an adult cat and are looking for a second pet or a companion for her, keep in mind that older cats can get annoyed and overwhelmed by a kitten's high energy level. A cat that is the same age or a little older usually makes for a much happier match.

Kittens are a lot like children, they need to be watched carefully so they stay out of trouble. They can easily get lost behind washers or stoves, like to play with electrical cords and blinds, and test their claws on screens, carpets, and drapes.

Adult cats no longer have these major behavioral problems, and are much quicker learners when it comes to the house rules.

If you have children under the age of five, it is far safer to adopt an easy going adult cat. Kittens are easily startled and can bite or scratch without meaning to hurt a child. That said, they are also fragile and can be easily hurt by a child who is not gentle and does not handle the kitten with care. Finally, kittens raised around noisy or active children often become skittish.

So, to be sure that you're bringing home a good-natured, outgoing, friendly cat to be your companion for the next 10 to 15 years, your best bet is an adult!

That's my pitch for adopting an adult kitty. If you are considering adopting a furry family member into your household, please take some time to get to know the "mature" residents. They will be very thankful - and you're sure to be happy with your choice! Purrs!

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