



Document written and provided by the European Association of the Devon Rex (www.aedrex.com)

WELCOMING YOUR KITTEN

Before you bring your new companion to its new residence, you must plan carefully for its arrival. You will have to stock up some necessities: litter tray, dishes for food and water, cat tree, scratching post.

Remember that the kitten will need time to adjust to live with a different owner. He may seem a bit apprehensive about the strange surrounding in which he finds himself, having spent the first weeks of his life with his mother and littermates. But, in a few days, with love and patience on your part, the transition will be successful.

Prior to the kitten's arrival, prepare a small room, such as a bedroom or bathroom. Remove any objects that may be dangerous to a cat, such as unstable shelves, small furniture, houseplants, etc. that could fall over if jumped on. Having a space apart from the rest of the family and any pet that you may already have offers the kitten a smaller area to accustom himself to.

Litter tray

It is better to choose a covered tray as it prevents litter from scattering to the four corners of the room at the first scratch of a paw. Litter tray must be put in a quiet place, easy to find for the kitten. Use the same litter as the breeder. If you want to change the type of the litter, it is advisable to do it progressively. Clean carefully the tray. Kittens are sensitive to odors so scooping twice a day will encourage regular use of the litter pan.

Food and water

Your kitten should be provided with fresh water and food, always available. He requires more calories per unit of body, due to the fact that he is growing at a fairly rapid pace. He should be fed several times per day, in small quantities. We recommend both food and water dishes be emptied and washed daily to prevent bacteria and germs from accumulating. Move the dishes away from the litter tray (about 1.5 meter).

It is important to welcome your kitten home with a familiar diet. If you change his food, do it progressively, on a week. This would avoid digestive problems.

Scratching post and cat tree

Cats need to sharpen their claws. It is also a way to mark out their territory with pheromones not detected by humans. Choose a sturdy sisal rope or, even better, a cat tree several feet tall and with a heavy base. Remember that Devon Rex prefer to be in a high place.

Cat beds

Your kitten needs various comfortable "beds", located in quiet places. Cushy cave soft beds are highly appreciated by cats but, sometimes, they prefer a bed or a sofa.



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BRINGING YOUR KITTEN HOME: FIRST STEPS

Bring your kitten and carrier to the designed room and close the door. Open the carrier door, but don't force the kitten to come out. He will emerge in his own time. After the kitten does emerge, leave the carrier door open so the cat can retreat if feeling scared. If your kitten arrived home with cat toys, keep these around the carrier. It is especially comforting for the kitten to have his towel blanket from his previous house.

Some kittens may meow a lot at the beginning of their life in a new home. This will not last a long time. Sitting nearby and chatting or playing with your kitten will increase his sense of security.

After the kitten has adjusted to the room and to you, leave the door open. Depending on his temperament, the kitten may take a week to venture forth and begin exploring his new home.

INTRODUCING OTHER PETS AND FAMILY MEMBERS

Once the kitten has become comfortable with you, introduce other family members slowly. Have them come into the room one at a time to pet and play with the cat.

Expect other household animals to display curiosity about the new comer. You will want to closely supervise their initial meeting. It is important to keep it short.

It is normal that two cats get to know each other display aggressive behavior. Growls and snarls make a strong impression but, at this stage, cats can be let together. Should your older cat attack the kitten? Then, isolated the kitten and try again the introduction later on.

If you have a dog, choose a place for the meeting where a "device" will allow the kitten to climb to find shelter. Generally, kittens will quickly adapt to dogs and older cats.

In any cases, don't hesitate to ask for the breeder's advices to make the transition easier for you and your kitten.