



Adopting Kittens in Pairs

If you're thinking about bringing a kitten into your life, there are many reasons why you should bring home a pair. Adopting two kittens may actually be much easier and more beneficial... for the kittens and for you.

First, if you're thinking you may eventually want two cats, starting off now with two feline youngsters is much easier than adding a second adult cat down the road. Adult cats are territorial, and the introduction process often requires some finesse and lots of patience. There are many other benefits, as well:

Kittens Learn From Each Other

Kittens are still learning. They learn from their mother, their environment and from each other. Kitten-to-kitten interaction and playtime are actually valuable educational opportunities to help them develop important social skills that will be needed later in life. They learn how to communicate and interpret each other's signals, how hard to bite during playtime and how to share territory. Play and curiosity are important parts of kitten education. There are many lessons taking place as kittens stalk, play, leap, climb, tumble, use their claws, practice posturing, etc. Kittens learn by observation, and a pair of kittens will help each other through this education. This applies to everything from using the litter box to what objects are safe to land on and what ones aren't. A more inquisitive kitten may help a more reluctant kitten to blossom.

Kittens Entertain Each Other

When you're busy, or away at work, two kittens can entertain each other. Not only does this eliminate the boredom that may drive a single kitten to entertain himself by climbing curtains or chewing on plants or electrical cords, but a pair of kittens will also wrestle and bite as play (and learn the limits of these activities from their playmate, naturally growing out of this baby behavior). A single kitten may end up practicing this painful and unwanted behavior on you, and you'll end up with an adult cat who still bites and scratches as 'play.'

Life Enrichment

For a kitten, the ability to have a companion for playtime can be one of the best forms of life enrichment. Many people are under the false impression that cats are solitary and don't want companionship, but they do have a social structure and most truly benefit and thrive when they have a feline buddy. Very often, the bond between two cats who have grown up together becomes very strong and special, and they'll be healthier, happier and better socialized.

Cost and Care

After the initial kitten vaccinations, the veterinary costs taper off in most cases. You'll most likely just be dealing with routine yearly appointments, and many veterinary clinics offer multipet discounts. With kittens, you'll initially just have the expense of one litter box until they grow bigger and then you'll add a second box. Scratching posts aren't expensive and if you're handy, you can even make one for your kittens. When it comes to food, even as kittens grow, you won't have the same food expense as you would if you adopted puppies.

When it comes to toys and cat furniture, your biggest expense will be a cat tree (and you'd have that expense regardless of whether you adopted one kitten or two). And if you're at all familiar with cats, you know that some of the best cat furniture is an empty cardboard box.

Finally, adopting two kittens brings you twice the love!

Information in part from Pam Johnson-Bennett, author of 'Think Like a Cat.' For more, visit www.catbehaviorassociates.com.