



Having trouble with your cat?

At some point in every cat owner's life, we all experience an issue with our pet exhibiting undesirable behavior. Maybe he scratches on the sofa, pees outside his litter box, or is aggressive with other pets. Cats are living beings and just like humans, it's unreasonable for us to expect them to behave perfectly all of the time. And, once you have made a commitment to own a cat, whether you purchased it, adopted it, or took in a stray, it becomes your responsibility to care for it and that includes dealing with health and behavioral challenges.

Some of the most common issues that lead people to give up their cats, unnecessarily, include:

- ☹ Scratching furniture
- ☹ Peeing outside the box
- ☹ Aggressiveness toward people or other animals

There is always a reason your cat behaves in an undesirable manner. It's up to you to figure out why and how to address it so that you and the cat can peacefully coexist.

Before you decide to give up your cat, or worse yet, subject it to certain euthanasia by relinquishing it to a shelter, make sure you have considered the following:

Undesirable Behavior	Reasons Why It May be Happening	What You Can Do
Urinating or defecating outside the litter box	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dirty litter boxes • Urinary tract infection • Marking caused by stress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feed a diet of high-quality foods and limit dry food. • Provide 1 litter box per cat and scoop twice daily • Have your vet check for a urinary tract infection • Do some detective work to determine the cause of the cat's stress: How often do I clean out the box? Is the box in a high traffic area? Do I have enough litter boxes for the number of cats in the house (have one more box than the total number of cats). Have I changed brands of litter? • Use Feliway plug-ins to calm cats and help with elimination and marketing behaviors • Clean soiled areas with Nature's Miracle or another cleanser that neutralizes (not masks) odor



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Undesirable Behavior	Reasons Why It May be Happening	What You Can Do
Scratching furniture, carpet, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marking • Stress • Simple need to scratch 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trim claws weekly • Dissuade scratching by squirting with water or shaking can of coins when he scratches • Have multiple scratching posts around house (vertical and horizontal) • Use sticky tape (Sticky Paws) to cover areas prone to scratching
Aggressiveness towards people or other pets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to integrate slowly • Changes in the home or routine which cause cats stress (they are creatures of habit) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow AWLFC's tips for integrating new cats slowly; start over if needed. • Isolate the cat in one room of the house for a week or so. Giving him his own quiet space may be precisely what he needs to feel more secure and less stressed. • Never play rough with your cat and reserve hands for petting, not playing to discourage use of teeth and claws as recreation • Introduce new members of the household gradually and with consideration for our the animal perceives the newcomer. • Do some detective work to figure out why he is being aggressive. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Does someone in your home rough-house with the animal, play tug-of-war, or yell at the animal? Is there loud boisterous yelling going on in your home between the humans? If children are in the household, are they poking, teasing, or tormenting the animal? Maybe your animal's behavior is a reflection of the behaviors of your household. If so, you need to change those behaviors immediately. Then, you must spend quality time playing with your animal in a gentle manner.



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People also give up their cats for reasons such as they are moving, having a baby, or someone in the family is allergic. Consider alternatives.

- **Allergies** - Allergic reactions can be controlled through medication and/or diet. Visit your doctor before you decide to give up your companion. Also, you can bathe your animal in distilled water (no need for sudsing, just pour the water over the animal and work through his or her coat). Distilled water removes the allergens from your companion animal.
- **Moving** - If you are planning a move, make sure you take enough time to investigate ways to transport your animal, whether the move is across town or across the country. Your companion animal is part of your family and not a disposable entity that can be left behind with a few empty cardboard boxes. And, just a note, if you do in fact abandon your animal when you move, you can, depending on the jurisdiction, be charged with animal cruelty.

If you have done everything in your power to resolve the problems to no avail, AWLFC will **help** you rehome your pet. By help, we mean that we will talk with you about the problem and perhaps offer ideas you may not yet have tried; we will allow you to post your cat on petfinder.com; and, we will allow you to bring it to adoption events at Petsmart and Pet Valu (you must remain with the cat and it must be up to date on vaccines and have tested negative for feline leukemia/FIV).

Remember, when you adopted this animal, you committed to care for it for its entire life. You are the one responsible for making good on that promise.