



Thinking of adopting a cat?

Before making a decision, ask yourself these questions:

Can you make a long-term commitment?

Cats typically live for 15-20 years. During this time you will likely experience many changes in your life—moving to a new house or apartment, changing jobs, getting married, having children, getting other pets, and traveling. Before you adopt, think about how you will handle caring for your cat and providing a loving home in the face of changes in your life.

Can you provide a suitable living environment?

While cats are better suited to small living spaces than dogs, there are things you need to consider before adopting, regardless of how big or small your residence is. Where will you put the litterbox? Where will the cat's food and water dishes be kept? Where will you put scratching posts and cat toys? It is also important to determine how you will keep your cat indoors. Cats live longer, healthier lives when they are kept indoors. Keeping your cat safely inside may mean altering current human behaviours, like leaving patio doors open.

Can you afford the costs of cat ownership?

As you can see in the table below, the basic costs of caring for a cat can exceed \$900 a year, with initial up front costs of over \$200. In addition, the costs of veterinary care for illnesses and accidents can cost anywhere from hundreds of dollars to thousands of dollars.

Initial Costs:		Typical Yearly Costs:		
Adoption fee (may vary)	\$120	Wet cat food	4 cans of cat food per month @ \$2	\$96
Food and water dishes	\$10	Dry cat food	1 bag (3.6kg) high quality dry food @ \$20 per month	\$240
Collar and identification tag	\$15	Cat treats	12 packages @ \$2	\$24
Brush and comb	\$15	Veterinary care	Yearly visit - exam and vaccinations	\$85
Litter, litter pan and scoop	\$20	Pet health insurance	Basic coverage for indoor cats @ \$12 per month	\$144
Scratching post and scratching box	\$40	Supplies	1 container cat litter per month @ \$10	\$120
Traveling crate	\$35	Cat care while away	Vacation 2 weeks @ \$15 per day	\$210
Toys and miscellaneous	\$20			
Total	\$275		Total	\$919

Do you have time to spend with a cat?

Despite being independent animals, cats need attention from their human family and time spent playing and cuddling. If you are away from your home for long periods of time, this may not be the best situation for adopting a pet.

How will you handle potential behaviour issues?

Cats are wonderfully complex and often mysterious creatures. It is important for you learn about normal cat behaviours before adopting, and how to deal with inappropriate behaviour such as scratching furniture, biting or not using a litter box. The Nova Scotia SPCA can provide you with information on cat behaviour and you can also find a lot of information on websites such as the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies (www.cfhs.ca).

Is everyone in your household supportive of welcoming a cat into the home?

When you adopt a cat, everyone in your household becomes a part of the cat's life and he or she becomes a part of theirs. If you have children, they need to demonstrate respect for animals and be able to learn and understand how to appropriately interact with cats. If anyone in your home objects to having a cat or is known to be allergic to cats, you should not consider adopting at this time. If you already have other pets, have you considered how to integrate your new cat with your existing furry friends, and what you will do if they do not get along?

If you decide that you are ready to adopt, contact your local SPCA, fill out an application form, meet the cats and kittens available for adoption, and consult with staff or volunteers to select an appropriate cat for you. Take your time—having a pet will change your life, and you need to be confident in your choice.

If you have realized this is not a good time in your life to adopt a cat, consider volunteering with the SPCA or other rescue groups in your community, or ask the SPCA about fostering. You'll get to spend time with cats while contributing to a great cause.