



# Kitten Taming 101

Presented by the Community Cat Coalition of Washington



From Hiss to Purr in 4 <sup>NOT SO</sup> Easy Steps

C.A.T.S.

Containment

Acclimatization

Touch

Socialization



# Containment

- **Contain the kittens in a small escape proof space like a bathroom or cage.**
  - **Check for holes under counters, open windows etc.**
  - **If caged, put the cage in a room where the kitten can be caught if it escapes.**



# Containment

- **Make the space kitten friendly**
  - **Soft bedding**
    - Feral kittens may soil the bedding for the first few days. Placing the soft spot higher than the litter box may help.
  - **Food and water**
    - Place these far from the litter box.
  - **Toys**
    - More is better!





# Containment

- **Why not give the kittens a big room?**
  - **Hiding will reinforce their instinct to hide from humans.**
  - **If you have to chase the kitten to interact with it, this will teach the kitten to run.**



# Containment

- **Things to consider.**
  - If one of the kittens isn't showing signs of improvement, consider separating it from the others.
  - Move the cage to a higher spot or provide a cat tree so you aren't looming above the kitten.





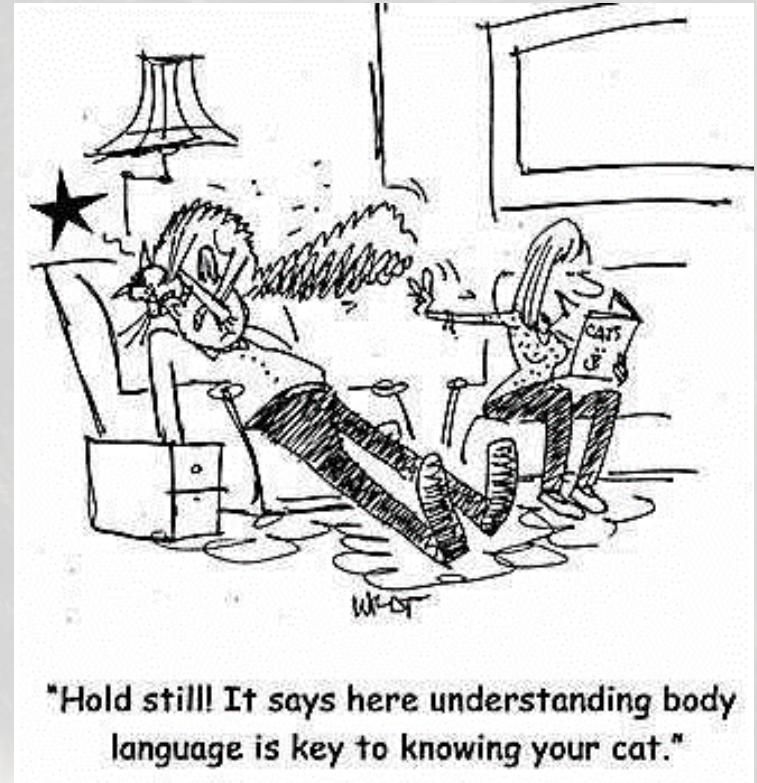
# Acclimatization

- **Get the kittens used to human and household sounds and movement.**
  - Turn on a radio, TV or iPod and vary the station. Start off quiet and turn the volume up gradually over the days.
  - Open cans, turn on sinks and add toys that help them get used to different sounds.



# Acclimatization

- Familiarize them to human movements. Move slowly at first and then speed up and vary your movements as they become braver.
- Read the kittens body language to gauge your movements.





# Acclimatization

- **Slowly introduce them to other household pets by allowing them to observe interactions from the safety of their cage or small room.**
  - **Be sure to “test” your dog or cat first. A scary interaction with a resident dog or cat can make them forever fearful of other animals.**



# Touch

- **Feral kittens view humans as potential predators and may scratch and bite to protect themselves. So, observe the kittens carefully before deciding how best to handle them.**





# Touch

- **Frightened kittens should be introduced to touch very slowly. Some people let them acclimate a couple days before attempting to touch.**
  - **Pet the kitten from a distance using a wand-style toy or feather.**
  - **Use heavy gloves or a towel on kittens who are hissing or showing defensive postures.**
  - **Avoid making direct eye contact. They will find you less frightening if you avert your eyes and keep your head down.**



# Touch

- **Timid or semi-feral kittens can be gently picked up, but it is a good idea to use protection at first until you see how they will react.**
- **Small kittens can be carried around in a front pack or in the pocket of a hoody sweatshirt.**





# Touch

- **How often should you touch them?**
  - **As much as possible!**
    - **Start with many brief touches. It is better to touch them briefly many times a day than to hold them for extended periods.**
    - **After the kittens are used to handling, touch and hold them in different positions.**



# Socialization

- **Socialization begins as soon as you get the kitten. Three tools help speed the process.**
  - **Food**
  - **Toys**
  - **People**





# Socialization

- **Your first tool is food.  
Use it well!**
  - **Be in the room when the kitten is eating good food. Leave hard food out all the time, but only give them canned food or treats by hand or when you are in the room talking to them.**
  - **Foods to try**
    - **Gerber baby food meats (no onions)**
    - **Tuna (in moderation)**
    - **Chicken**
    - **Canned food**



# Socialization

- **Your second tool is toys.**
  - Wand style toys from pet shops work great. Tempt them by slowly dragging the toy in front of them.
  - Hand made toys work great too. Tie a string to wadded up paper, feathers or foil. Take it away when you aren't supervising because string can be deadly to cats and kittens if swallowed.





# Socialization

**Introduce the kittens to as many humans as possible. This is critical! If they only meet you, they will only be tame for you and won't transfer this to other humans.**

- **Bribe neighbor kids to play with them.**
- **Invite friends over and then hand them a kitten.**
- **Move the kittens into a cage in your living room so they are around people all the time.**



# What happens if the kittens don't socialize?

