



© Thomas Northcut | Getty Images

© Squaredpixels | Getty Images

The Perfect Cat *for* *Your Life Stage*

By RITA REIMERS



© AnilinaWinnor | Getty Images

Choosing the right kitty isn't as simple as picking out the most adorable whisker face you can find. You need to consider how your lifestyle is able to meet the needs of your chosen feline pal. It's not as much your age but your stage in life that plays a role in deciding what type and age of cat is the best fit for you.

Single professional

Are you on your own, trying to make your mark in the world and focused on your career? If you're away from home for many hours at a time, a kitten or high-maintenance breed like a Bengal, Ragdoll or Persian might not be the right cat for you. A young adult cat, who has already been socialized and through her wild and crazy kittenhood, of a lower-maintenance breed is a smarter choice.

Of course, your adult cat will need plenty of places to nap, things to climb and stimulating toys to play with, too, so she won't get bored while home alone. A bonded kitty pair who can keep each other company might be the best fit for an on-the-go single person who might

work late hours — and socialize late hours, too.

If you have young children

Families with babies or toddlers can be a wonderful environment for an easygoing older cat or for a young adult, gentle breed cat like a Maine Coon, Birman or Sphynx. Toddlers might be a little too aggressive to be around very young kittens, and parents of young children may be a little too occupied with the kids to give needy kittens the handling and socialization they need. Older adult cats can also be good with younger children, as they tend to be calm and don't get stressed as easily as a very young cat. Older cats also tend to sleep quite a bit, and anyone looking on YouTube has seen plenty of cute babies and cats slumbering peacefully together.

If you have older children

Once the kids get older and can be taught how to handle them, kittens and young cats can be a great addition to today's modern family. My friend, Linda, and her family just adopted their very first kitten, after previously adopting all adult cats. Everyone from Linda's husband to her 13-year-old son is fascinated watching Paws and his tiny kitten antics, not to mention his rapid growth!

Even their adult cats and dog are captivated by the tiny bundle of fluff. Kittens can teach kids responsibility and how to take care of another loving being, not to mention they are great fun to play with, too. Those more energetic breeds of any age like Maine Coons, Bengals and Siberians might also be a good choice as a family cat.

The cats are your kids

A kitten is a wonderful choice for someone established in his or her career who doesn't have kids at home or travel a lot. At this life stage, you have some good parenting, pet or just plain life

experience, which will come in handy. Kittens need lots of supervision to keep them out of trouble, as well as plenty of love and handling to become loving, social creatures. They also need someone who has patience to spare as they explore their environment (and get into things, too!).

Adult cats from some of the more affection-needy breeds like the Sphynx, Cornish Rex or the Egyptian Mau are also perfect for the single or couple who has the time and love to devote to them. Senior cats may also be a good choice, since these cats may require closer observation in order to discover any medical issues that may come up as they age (and someone who can afford the vet bills).

Silver adults

For a retired senior adult, the best feline fit depends on his or her lifestyle. There are very active seniors who spend a lot of time out of the house, traveling, doing community service or hobbies like golf, and they might not be a great fit for a kitten but rather an adult low-maintenance breed or two. An older, calmer kitty is great for someone who is more of a homebody looking for a cat to sit by his or her side keeping them company while they watch TV, or they might enjoy the extra energy that a tiny kitten brings.

Once you decide to bring a cat or kitten into your life, no matter what age or breed you choose, give her lots of love and attention, along with everything else she will need to live a long and happy life with you. 🐾



Rita Reimers' Cat Behavior Coaching has helped many cat owners better understand their feline friends. Visit RitaReimers.com to read her cat behavior blog or to book a cat behavior coaching session. Rita is also the CEO/owner of JustForCatsPetSitting.com. Connect with her on Facebook and on Twitter @thecatanalyst.