



Cats: Is More Really Merrier?

For the avid cat lover, there is no such thing as too many cats in the house. But your cat may have different ideas. Some cats prefer to be alone. Others are sociable and outgoing. They interact well with other pets and don't seem to mind sharing their domain.

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What makes one cat more sociable than another? There are several factors, including innate behavior and early life experiences.

Cats in the Wild

In the wild, cats are loners. They tend to hunt alone, instead of in packs. There's a reason for this. Cats feed on small prey such as mice, birds and rodents. If a group of cats hunted a single mouse, there wouldn't be enough food to go around. So cats hunt alone. They eat alone and they live alone. Despite their reclusive nature, multiple cats can live happily together so long as there is plenty of food and resources.

The Early Years

The first 7 weeks of a cat's life are crucial. What a cat learns at this young age can rarely be unlearned. These early experiences directly impact a cat's social skills and personality. If a kitten is allowed to interact with other animals in a positive way, he will learn they are not a threat. It is important that these animals are calm around the kitten so they do not scare or harm him. Kittens learn through observation. So it's essential that their mother is relaxed and sociable too. Otherwise, kittens will imitate their mother's skittish behavior.

How Many Is Too Many?

So how many cats are too many? It depends on your cats. Some cats are so reclusive and withdrawn they simply cannot stand the thought of sharing their home with another pet. This type of cat should be the only pet in the house. But if your cat is friendly, it is possible for multiple cats to get along and live peaceably together. For some people 5-10 cats is an ideal number. In this situation, having sociable cats is mandatory.

Here are a few tips to help your cats get along with each other:

- Provide plenty of bowls and free choice food for each cat. Serve wet food twice a day.
- Provide each cat with their own bed or kitty condo where they can relax by themselves.
- Provide your cats with a rich, interactive environment. Have plenty of scratching posts, climbing trees, window boxes and perches.
- When you bring a new cat into your family, keep him separate for a few days. Allow him to interact with the other cats under supervision until everyone is use to each other.

A Few Things to Consider

Having a houseful of friendly cats can be a lot of fun. But there are a few things you should keep in mind. The more cats you have, the more time and money you'll need to invest in them. You will probably spend about 20 minutes a day scooping litter boxes. You'll need to be sure each cat is vaccinated annually. And you will need to spend time personally interacting with each cat.

A Word of Caution

Even if you really love cats, be careful not to fall into the collection trap. Don't adopt cats simply because you feel like you need one more. This could cause needless suffering for the animals. Be sure you have the time, money and patience for each cat in your care.