

# HANDLING AND PICKING UP CATS

## Need More Help?

Find additional resources at  
[pasadenahumane.org/behavior](https://pasadenahumane.org/behavior).

## Do Cats Like to Be Picked Up?

- Most cats do not enjoy being picked up. Each cat has individual preferences of how you pick them up, whether they like being held or how long they'll tolerate it if they do let you hold them.
- If at any time the cat wiggles or attempts to flee, give them the option to move away and begin your training again later.

## First Steps

- Turn your body to the side, sit or crouch down, and let the cat approach you.
- Try to avoid reaching for or approaching the cat while you are standing. Take your time and don't chase the cat.
- Check your cat's overall body language and how they are reacting to touch in general. Your cat should be relaxed and seeking interaction. If your cat is not receptive, try again another time.

## Work Up to Petting

- Start off by touching your cat's cheek or the top of their head.
- If they remain calm, keep your hand on the cat, and slowly pet the cat along its back. Then, begin to pet with your other hand, testing if they are receptive to being lifted.
- Slowly slide your hand down the side of the cat that is farthest away from you and down their front legs to their chest to see if they will accept the embrace.
- Keep an eye on their body language. Offer a lickable treat on the ground if they seem unsure, but give them the choice to move away if they prefer.

## How to Carry a Cat

- When carrying the cat, hold them close to your body to make them feel more secure.
- Secure their back feet and let their front paws rest on your arm or even over your shoulder.
- Refrain from holding the cat with their belly up. This may trigger their self-righting reflex.

## Emergencies

- If it is an emergency and you need to pick up the cat immediately, use a towel or blanket.
- Wrap the towel tightly and apply firm pressure, taking care to secure their legs and paws. Some cats will prefer if their head is covered, and others may not.
- This method of restraint should only be done if absolutely necessary and is not recommended for training purposes.

We are always here to help! You can find additional behavior and training resources at [pasadenahumane.org/behavior](https://pasadenahumane.org/behavior).