

SHOWING YOUR HOUSEHOLD PET - A QUICK GUIDE

So you've come to the cat show and seen all the wonderful cats—purebred and ones that look like your own Max or Chloe at home. You've seen the judges pick out their favorite cats in the household pet finals and tell yourself, "My cat can do that and is a lot prettier too"! What's the next step? How can you bring home those fancy rosettes? Welcome to the wonderful world of cat showing.

The first requirement is that your cat (if 8 months or older) has to be spayed/neutered. ACFA allows declawed cats (CFA bans all declawed cats), but we don't encourage the practice of doing so. We understand that many people adopt shelter cats who might have been declawed by the previous owner.

Your household pet is just as special and loved as any of the other cats in the show hall—sometimes more so. But is your cat ready for the excitement? Is your cat pretty friendly to other people that visit? Do they like to play with toys and feathers? Do they like to be picked up by strangers? If so, your cat just might enjoy a show. So give it a try and see.

ACFA is unique, as you can show on just Saturday or Sunday (4 rings) or both days. I usually recommend a first timer (person and cat) to just pick one day and see how things go. Don't be worried if the first ring or two doesn't go well—this is new to both of you. Some cats take to the ring from the start; others may take a few shows to enjoy things. The important thing is to respect your cat. No matter how pretty Fluffy is and how wonderful at home, some cats just never enjoy being on display with a lot of other cats around. If you have another cat at home, maybe that one would do better than Fluffy.

The major requirements are simple ones: being clean, in good condition, and well groomed (especially if Chloe has long hair) are important. A bath is needed a few days before the show, all nails clipped, eyes/ears clean, and a nice personality will bring home a rosette for you. The judges look for all this

and many will tell you the HHP's (that's the cat show abbreviation for "household pets") are the hardest group to judge because there is no standard to go by other than their favorites or something that catches their eye about your cat.

As far as what to bring to the show:

- the cat in a carrier (of course)
- 6 matching towels or material to line the inside of the cage (3 sides, top and bottom, and an extra towel in case of accidents (water or litter pan))
- food and water dishes
- bottled water and food from home
- grooming supplies (combs/nail clippers, cotton balls, powder if needed)
- a pen for writing your finals in the rings
- a book to read in case you get bored
- a few small cat toys

It's an unwritten rule among the exhibitors that if you forget a bed for your cat, you have to buy one at the show.....LOL—just kidding, but you should bring something for Fluffy to curl up in and sleep in the cage.

Don't be afraid to ask questions of your fellow exhibitors next to you. We all were once first time showers and will be glad to help you out in any way. Just ask how you can enter our next year's show.

By Martice Carlson
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