

# Bathing Your Kitten

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Giving your kitten a bath while she is young will help her feel more comfortable with baths in the future. Although cats usually groom themselves, sometimes—depending on how long their hair is—they will need a bath occasionally. Getting her used to baths now will make the experience easier for her in the future.

Be sure to use shampoos and conditioners specifically made for kittens. Be sure to protect your kitten's ears from getting water in them. You will also want to be careful not to get soap in her eyes.

Depending on where you choose to bathe her, be sure to introduce the water slowly. The kitchen sink works well with kittens and with adult cats if they are not too big. Turn the water on gently, opposite from the side of the sink where the kitten is sitting. This will allow her time to get used to the sound of the water. While slowly running the water out of the faucet, put a handful of water over her back to give her a chance to experience the feel of the water on her coat. If she squirms or tries to run away, stop putting water on her but keep the water running on the other side of the sink. Do some touches on her face with your index or middle finger. Start on her forehead and do tiny circles, moving her skin around one and a quarter times in one spot. Work your way down to the top of her nose and just do a few slow circular touches until she calms down. This will calm down most cats. Once she has calmed down, again try putting a handful of water on her back. Repeat this a few times until she becomes comfortable and is not struggling to get away. If after a few tries she is still fighting you, do a few more touches on her forehead, put her in a towel and gently rub her for a minute or so, and put her on the floor. For today, bath time is over. Practice this a few days in a row until she becomes comfortable with the water on her back.

It is very important that you, rather than the kitten, decide when she leaves. If you let her go when she wants to, she will train you to do things her way. This is an opportunity to let her know you are here to understand and help her, but events will happen when you say they will, and not when she demands.

If the kitten is comfortable with the handful of water on her back, then you can move the nozzle from the sink over to her and let it run on her coat gently. Let her get used to the feel of the water. Once she is willing to hold still for a few seconds, you can begin her bath.

For the first actual bath, do not use much soap. The first bath is more of an opportunity for her to get comfortable with being bathed. The following day you can give her a real bath, but do not do too much too quickly. You want her to get used to baths so she will not fight you in the future.



*If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us*