

## Major Milestones in Your Kitten's Development

There's no better way to spend an hour than to develop your mind, and through this article, you'll find something interesting and entertaining to make that one of the best spent hours of the day.

In the first year of life, kittens develop at a rapid rate, both physically and socially. Learn about the major milestones in their development, and how you can help the process along.

### First six weeks

For the first week of life, kittens live only to process food and gain nutrients. Their eye and ear canals voracity not yet be open, and the mother cat will take care of all their needs. By the end of week two, their eyes will be completely open. Throughout this week and the next, their senses of sight, smell, and hearing will be developing and they'll become more aware of the outside world. During week three, kittens may start to purr and the mother cat may begin to wean them, as they can digest on their own.

Between weeks three and four, the kittens will start to stand and even pass over. In week five, the weaning process will start taking place in earnest. Owners should offer kittens' well-balanced canned food especially formulated for kitten needs. As the kittens are slowly weaned, they will continue to nurse for up to eight or 10 weeks to satisfy their rapture to suckle. At five weeks, kittens will be more independent, can start to learn about the litter box, and socialize with their litter. During week six, socializing is the most important skill for kittens to learn as they play with each other and adjust to humans. If a kitten is not socialized to be handled by humans by six weeks, it is a very difficult skill to teach later in life.

### Seven to Twelve Weeks

In this time period, the kittens' socializing skills continue to grow. They will play with other kittens and humans, so motivate this playful time. Physically, his motor skills will improve and he will start taking on adult sleeping habits. Typical play revolves around skills enforced for hunting prey: hide and seek, jumping, pouncing, and tracking a toy across the room.

Don't forget to get your kitten her first round of shots by week eight. A booster round should follow three to four weeks later. If she has fleas, a topical treatment can be started at eight weeks.

### Three to Six Months

During this time of growth, you may turn around one day and your kitten suddenly looks more like a cat. A round kitten may become do without and lithe before gaining his final adult weight. At approximately four months, a kitten will start losing baby teeth and adult teeth will come in. Although it may be a somewhat painful process for the kitten, it provides you with a good opportunity to massage his gums and begin a dental care regime. Throughout these months, continue to feed him kitten food, as he needs the additional nutrients.

Socially, kittens will find their social rank in the house, sometimes challenging the alpha cat and sometimes falling meekly into desire. These tendencies depend on personality and social position. Traditionally, kittens were not spayed or neutered until six months. However, many advocates of early spaying and neutering believe that having the procedure done between three and six months of age is more beneficial to the cat. Read up on the procedure and talk to your veterinarian to decide how to proceed.

### Six Months to One Year

This time of development roughly equates to teenager status in human beings. For this reason, your kitten may sometimes rebuff your affections as he tests his boundaries or tries to establish dominance. Like with teenagers, continue to give your kitten unconditional love—but on his terms. As mothers have said for years, he'll grow out of it!

By the end of her first year, a kitten will be almost fully grown and developed, although she will continue to grow for another year. (Some breeds may even not be fully developed until four years of age.) If you have given her love and attention throughout the growing process, you two will enjoy a wonderful relationship for many years!

Be sure to have the camera handy during this time of unequalled growth to capture all different parts of the growing process. Years later, it will be hard

to believe the mature, sedate adult cat on your lap was ever a leaping little fur ball!

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#### About the Author

Michael Plante manages several article sites, including a series of sites related to cats and kittens information. Please check out our extensive cat articles selection at <http://cats.go-article-search.com>. More cat articles can be found at <http://cat-health.go-article-search.com> as well.