



British Shorthairs

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The British Shorthair

About the British Shorthair

The British Shorthair is the oldest cat breed in Great Britain but traces its ancestry back to the domestic cats of Rome. Originally, the Romans kept these cats as pets for rodent control. The cats hung out in Great Britain's alleys, gardens, barns, households and pubs earning their keep as the perfect mousetraps. In the 1800's, Harrison Weir was well known for being instrumental in establishing the British Shorthair as an officially recognized breed. This breed quickly became popular through his efforts in England's first cat show at the Crystal Palace of London. Before the turn of the century, this breed declined in popularity and was nearly decimated after the chaos of World War II. After the war, breeders dedicated to preserving the British Shorthair gained permission from the British Governing Council of the Cat Fancy to interbreed with other cat breeds to rebuild the gene pool. These efforts transformed the British Shorthair into its current form: a large, powerful mini-teddy bear with a full, round face and a placid disposition.



Average Weight	12-18 pounds	Temperament	Affectionate, calm demeanor, loyal
Average Height	Medium-large	Good with Children?	Good with children and other pets
Coat	Short, wooly coat	Health Concerns	Gingivitis, cardiomyopathy

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British Shorthair Characteristics

The British Shorthair is compact, well balanced, powerful, and short. Its body is medium to large-sized with a level back and deep, broad chest. The head is round and massive with a thick neck and round face, rounded forehead, well developed chin and distinctive muzzle. Its ears are medium-sized, and its large, round eyes are set wide apart. Actual eye color depends on the shade of the coat. Its tail is thick at the base with a rounded, tapering tip. Its coat is short, very dense, and wooly.



Selecting Your British Shorthair Kitten

A breeder is your best source for obtaining a British Shorthair. There are only a few British Shorthair breeders in the world and most produce very few kittens each year. In fact, you will probably have to get your name on a waiting list (especially if you have your heart set on a specific color). When selecting a breed of cat, know that every breed has a different characteristic or personality, and it is important for you to consider this in your selection. When you make your decision, whether it is from a breeder, a rescue or adoption agency, your local shelter, a friend, or even a newspaper ad, keep in mind that cats are very good pets to have.



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A Few Words About Adoption

Adoption is a great way to obtain a cat, but if you are looking for a British Shorthair, you may not be able to find one to adopt. If you locate a British Shorthair through adoption, keep in mind the breed history may not be readily available. Always insist on shot records, and make sure that the cat's physical condition is excellent and well documented. Owners may be charged a nominal cost for expenses associated with spayed or neutered cats adopted through an adoption agency.

A Few Words About Breeders

The British Shorthair is very rare, and availability of this breed narrows down your opportunity to go to an adoption center. In fact, breeders may have to refer you to other breeders. When you do find a breeder, they should have information concerning the specific cat you are interested in - such as the background, genetic traits, personality, vaccinations, and health of the cat. The reputation of the breeder is of utmost importance. Schedule a tour of the facility to check for sanitary and humane conditions of the location.

Bringing Your British Shorthair Home

The British Shorthair is independent yet very affectionate to its owners and will often follow people around the house. Males especially are very people oriented. They are like little teddy bears and are extremely quiet but very alert and curious. They are never in a hurry and move cautiously. They make ideal pets for less active owners as well as for rather busy households. Keep in mind that kittens are just like children; they need a lot of attention.

The British Shorthair Kitten

Your pet will be its healthiest, if you feed it a quality dry kitten food for the first year, and that one food only. Human food can cause digestive upset, because kittens develop enzyme systems to digest the protein in their food but not those in ours. Also try to use quality kitten and cat foods that are low in magnesium and designed to cause acidic urine. These are important factors to help prevent painful cystitis or even a more serious urinary blockage. British Shorthairs are quiet and even-tempered, particularly when they're first introduced. When they get over their initial shyness, however, they become extremely faithful companions. British Shorthairs tend to show their loyalty to the entire family rather than to select one person. They are very affectionate, quietly following you from room to room until they can settle contentedly by your side. They are especially good with children and other types of pets. A moderately active cat, they are not destructive as a breed, adapting well to any size household.



You'll need these basics before your Shorthair comes home. Click the items below to go to CheapPetStore.com to find the best prices for online pet supplies.

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The British Shorthair Adult

It does take this breed a long time to mature. Both sexes will continue to fill out and gain weight until about 4 years of age. A British Shorthair does not like to sit on your lap but likes to be hugged and carried like a baby. They do not meow a lot and are very quiet cats.

As your cat ages, his nails, paw pads, coat, skin, eyes and ears need ongoing attention. Make grooming a happy time for your cat.

Since this breed has a fairly mat free coat, grooming is easy. Also keep claws trimmed as needed and keep teeth tartar under control.

The British Shorthair Senior

The British Shorthair is very active up until they are about a year old and starts to slow down after a year. By the age of 4 to 6 years old, they are very sedentary; "couch potatoes". On the whole, British Shorthairs are very healthy and long-lived. You can expect a British to live from 14 to 20 years. You may want to provide a more appropriate sleeping and lounging area for your pet. You can help him manage his health with the proper pet healthcare aids, knowledge, and care.

Most cats are considered geriatric at age 10 and older, though most live 15 years or more. Senior pets may have changes in disposition and could easily be stressed out by active young children. They may show signs of irritability when being handled. It is important to know that senior animals tend to do things their own way and in their own time. Care for your senior in a loving, gentle manner mixed with a little patience and understanding.

Medical Considerations

Be careful not to feed a kitten near a dog and always provide plenty of fresh water. Most breeders recommend a high-quality dry food. Care must be taken to not allow your British Shorthair to get fat, or its life span will be shortened. Middle-aged cats (5-10) are most likely to have weight problems, which can usually be controlled by switching to a low-calorie food. Feed your cat once or twice a day; if your cat seems to be overly heavy, contact your veterinarian.

Certain genetic health disorders may be more or less of a problem in a particular breed than in other breeds. For example, a breed may have a slightly higher incidence of gum disease than the cat population as a whole, but have a lower incidence of heart disease or liver disease. By working with a responsible breeder who will speak openly about health issues, you are encouraging sound breeding practices.

The most common inherited health problems are gingivitis (red inflamed gums), which will cause an affected cat to require careful dental care, and cardiomyopathy, which can cause anything from a minor heart murmur to severe heart trouble. Again, neither of these problems is specific to the breed.



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