



# All About the **Exotic**

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# The Exotic Shorthair

## About the Exotic Shorthair

The Exotic Shorthair, commonly called the Exotic and known colloquially as the “easy-care Persian,” is a short-haired version of that breed. First recognized as a separate breed in the late 1960’s, Exotics are notable for their large, round eyes, beautiful coloring, and flatter faces.

The Exotic was the outcome of an experiment by American Shorthair breeders who crossed their cats with Persians in an attempt to produce cats with Persian coloring and shorthair. Delightfully, because of successive outbreeding with Persians, they produced cats in an array of colors with lush, low-maintenance fur and a sedate manner.

Average Weight	7-14 Lbs	Temperament	Quiet, sweet, loyal.
Average Height	Medium-sized	Good with Children?	Yes! Excellent with children
Coat	Plush and dense	Health Concerns	Jaws, eyes, sinuses and kidney problems

## Exotic Shorthair Characteristics

Ideally, Exotic cats have the same body and features as their Persian cousins: a short, stocky body and legs, a deep chest, and round paws. Their lovely round eyes are bold and attentive, set widely apart on their slightly squashy face. Their tails are thick and relatively short compared to other kinds of cats. They are quiet and loyal. They do love to play and to be petted, however, not retiring from attention.

## Selecting Your Exotic Shorthair Kitten

Making the decision to either adopt or purchase your kitten from a breeder is a matter of personal choice. Both options are discussed here, along with some positives and negatives for both.

### A Few Words About Adoption

Every year, thousands of animals are either captured or turned in by their owners to be adopted. These pets can make wonderful companions and desire a loving home to call their own. When considering adoption, you should choose an animal shelter or rescue in your nearby community that you trust and one that has a long-standing reputation for providing exceptional care to the animals. Shelters that have an on-site vet clinic are a plus. Many facilities will require the pet to be spayed or neutered before the adoption is complete. This fee will be included in the adoption costs.



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## A Few Words About Breeders

Some people will prefer that their Exotic Shorthair comes from a reputable breeder. This can be the best choice for owners wishing to show their cat or become breeders themselves. Breeders can provide you with a wealth of knowledge around Shorthairs, including health issues, family history, and the various breed characteristics. You can find cat breeders by looking in the newspaper, searching on the internet, or checking with the local vet. You should have a list of questions ready to ask the breeder when you visit or call. It is good to inquire about the length of time the breeder has been in business, if the parents will be available for you to see, and what kind of health guarantees and records will be provided. Expect a good breeder to have several questions for you as well, such as the environment in which the cat will reside, and how much time you will be able to spend with the cat.

Purchasing your Exotic Shorthair from a breeder or adopting are both good choices. You need to be sure to do your research first and to avoid making a quick decision based on immediate availability. Sometimes it is better to build a relationship first with a chosen breeder and plan for an upcoming litter

## How to Choose your Exotic Shorthair

Choosing a new kitten can be one of the most exciting events in your family. It is important that you have done your homework upfront and know what kind of cat you are looking for. Some things to look for when selecting your new kitten are:

- No major skin conditions; clean, healthy coat
- Clean and clear eyes
- Coughing or difficult breathing (signs of respiratory infections)
- Paw pads soft and no deep cracking or infections
- Limping, little or no movement (signs of injury or birth defects)
- Proper weight/size

## Bringing Your Exotic Shorthair Home

Kittens are explorers, and everything for them is a potential adventure. Be sure to provide a safe and secure environment for your new friend. In an effort to prepare for the care of your new best friend, you should create a checklist and learn about the special needs of your pet. Make sure that your floors are free of clutter. This includes shoes and electric cords, as kittens like to explore and can sometimes chew. Use the rule "out of sight, out of mind" when introducing your kitten to his new environment. If you have other pets already, you should be sure that their food is in a safe place, at least in the beginning until everyone adjusts.

It's also a good idea to pick up a book on your kitten, so that you can further understand the breed and what sort of things to expect as they grow. Once your kitten comes home, you will want to make an appointment with your vet, if you have one already, or chose one based on a recommendation or by locale. If you have purchased your kitten from a breeder or animal shelter, they have most likely had their first set of shots. Regular visits to the vet will ensure your pet a happy and healthy life. Your vet will also be able to address any concerns, behavior issues, or other questions that you might have.



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#### EXPERT TIP

#### Selecting a Carrier

A cat should be able to stand and turn around inside a closed carrier. If you have a Abyssinian kitten, consider the average height and weight of an adult and choose a crate based on those specifications. The average size of an adult Abyssinian is 10 lbs. Choose a sturdy and safe carrier for medium sized breeds such as the Abyssinian.

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## The Exotic Shorthair Kitten

Each stage of your pet's life is characterized by special needs. Kittens' lives are full of learning experiences. Enjoy the time you spend with your Exotic Shorthair kitten. Early socialization normally prohibits anxious behaviors from surfacing. Good habits, as well as poor ones, are established at this early age. Use consistent training methods and show your kitten your expectations in a positive way and you will not be disappointed.

## The Exotic Shorthair Adult

As your cat begins to age, his needs begin to change. Keep surprises to a minimum by being prepared. Your cat should be active and healthy. An ill-tempered Exotic is unlikely, so watch out for any behavioral changes. Exotics are also vulnerable to kidney troubles, so you and your vet should keep an eye on your Exotic once it moves into middle age. 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 does not mat its coat, grooming is easy. Also keep claws trimmed as needed and keep teeth tartar under control.

## The Exotic Shorthair Senior

Older cats have different needs. Dietary changes are the most prevalent at this life stage. As your cat ages, so does his digestive system. Make sure your senior Exotic Shorthair maintains a proper diet and receives proper nutrients by starting him on daily vitamins. Keep abreast of the latest trends in dental products. There are many tartar control products on the market today. 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. Most cats live until about 15 years. Senior pets have many changes in disposition and could easily be stressed by active young children. They may show signs of irritability when being handled. Exotic Shorthairs are genuinely loving animals and are not known to cause harm, but grumpy seniors have a way of making sure that you are aware when they are unhappy. 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

Chief among these are issues related to their short jaws. Exotics can have trouble biting and eating, and may develop dental problems. Eye problems can be both genetic, such as sinus and tear duct problems, and diseases that result from having so much of their eyes exposed. Kidney problems, specifically Polycystic Kidney Disease (PKD), are inherited by both Exotics and Persians. It will often manifest at about 7 years of age.

Finally, you must be very careful if you are getting a kitten from a breeder. Like Persians and Siamese cats, Exotics are highly desirable, which can lead to excessive in-breeding and over-breeding by dishonest feline breeders. Because of potential problems, be sure to check for issues in the kitten's parents and discuss health concerns with any breeder you visit. Like any companion animal, be sure to have your cat examined by a veterinarian regularly.



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