

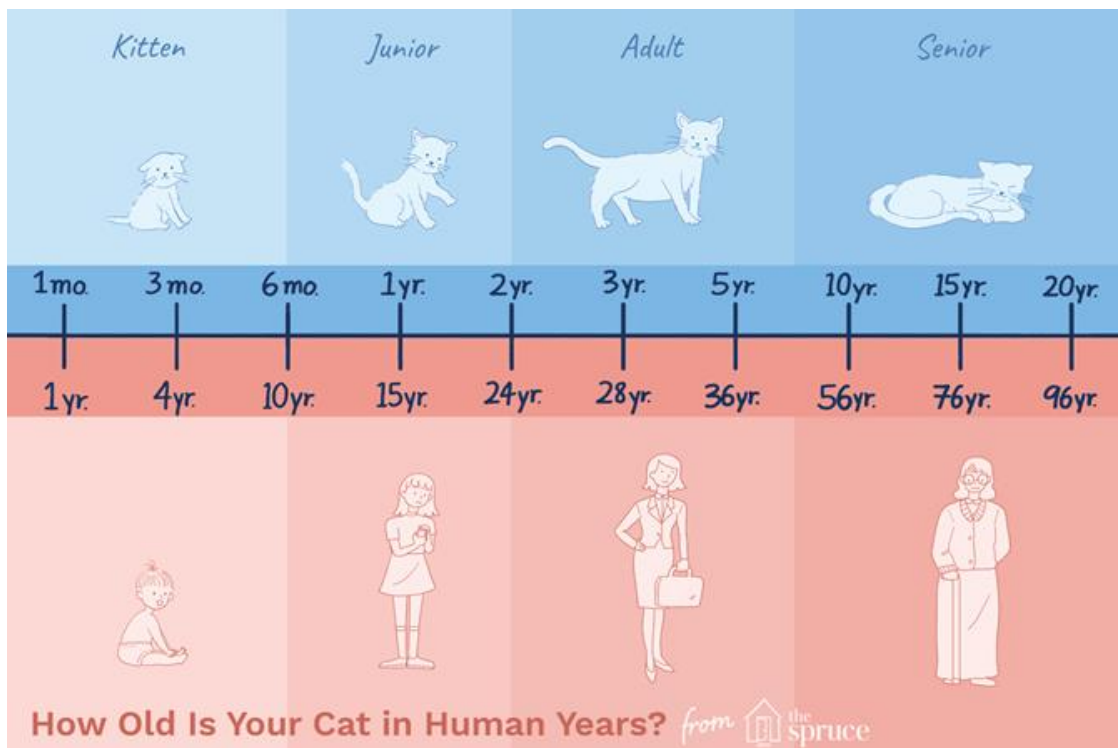
## Senior Cats – Marvelous & Mature

### What is it about the splendid senior cat?

- What you see is what you get. Her personality is already pretty well established. And whether she is active, a total couch potato or somewhere in between, there is no waiting for her to grow up and out of kitten hood.
- A senior cat is used to having somebody to love and they have an immense amount of love still to give.
- She may no longer care to climb the curtains, but is still young enough to climb onto your lap for a good cuddle or a snooze.
- A senior cat may not wish to engage in madcap kitten antics, but may appreciate some gentle play with interactive wand toys and stay still long enough to enjoy a good petting session.
- If your senior cat has recently lost her feline buddy, give her time to grieve before getting another feline. Most older cats enjoy being the sole recipient of your attention. The pheromone plugin Feliway Classic helps older kitties get over their grief. Cats have as many different personalities as people, check in with the Marin Humane cat behavior consultants about the best way to make a match.

**What makes a senior cat?** Much depends on genetics, lifestyle and care. The American Association of Feline Practitioners gives this guidance:

- Cats age 7 to 10 years old are considered to be mature.
- Cats age 11 to 14 years old are considered seniors.
- Cats ages 15+ are considered geriatric.



### What should you consider when sharing your life with a senior cat?

- Senior cats (as do cats of all ages) thrive on routine. Avoid or limit changes to their routine and environment.
- Whether it is playtime, cuddle-time or just hanging out together, be sure to plan special times each day to share each other's company.
- Senior cats need mental stimulation and regular exercise. Gentle play will help keep their minds alert and their joints moving, but keep the sessions short to avoid overexertion and any discomfort.
- Keep your senior cat's mind working well with some easy food puzzles.
- Make life comfortable for her by providing stairs or a ramp to help her get up to your bed or favorite resting places, provide low entry litter boxes, pet safe heated or therapeutic beds, elevated food and water dishes (or even a fountain!) and night lights.
- Help your senior cat with grooming—achy joints make it more difficult to reach certain spots. Use soft bristles or a soft pin brush to help remove loose hair and a small "greyhound" comb to help tease out matted hair. Keep grooming time short, reward with treats during the session and stop before you see any signs of irritation.
- Senior cat nails can often become long and brittle. Help your senior cat keep her nails in shape by providing a variety of cat scratching surfaces. Regular trimming will also help prevent overgrowth.
- Keep her life simple, serene and calm by **NOT** adding a kitten to the family. But if you do-- consider adding two kittens! Two kittens will play, play and play together, leaving your senior cat to enjoy her days napping in sun puddles or on your lap rather than trying to avoid an overly enthusiastic kitten.
- Keep a good rapport with your veterinarian. Your veterinarian will help guide you through normal age-related changes and age-related conditions or diseases in your cat. Twice a year vet visits are recommended as they age. After 2 years of age, cats age approximately 4 years for every human year. Of course, sudden changes in eating, drinking, urine output or behavior require an immediate veterinary exam.



**Zen and the Senior Cat:** Your senior cat is also a wise teacher. Let her show you how to age gracefully, with dignity, with a sense of humor and how to live in the present moment. Cats have no regrets about yesterday and no expectations about tomorrow. It's all about the "here and now" for your cat. Delight in the day to day companionship, love and joyful nature of our cats—especially our senior feline friends—they so depend on our care, love, patience and understanding during their marvelous and mature years.

### Feline Resources:

We are here to help! Marin Humane's [Behavior & Training](#) department conducts various [cat workshops](#). Sign up on our [Cat Behavior Workshops](#) page for the next available topic. We also have Cat Behavior Consultants who are available for private training or [consultations](#) (phone, online or in-home) at 415.506.6284 or [MarinHumane.org/oh-behave/cats/](http://MarinHumane.org/oh-behave/cats/).