



Living With A Blind Cat Fact Sheet

Cats may become blind for several reasons but some common causes include:

- Retinal detachment (often due to high blood pressure)
- Uveitis (inflammation of the inside of the eye)
- Cataracts, lens luxation or glaucoma (all usually secondary to uveitis)
- Retinal degeneration
- Tumours that necessitate removal of the eye/eyes
- Trauma causing severe eye damage or loss

Cats are generally very independent animals, and on the whole cope well with blindness. Most blind cats will continue to lead full and happy lives and can often do nearly all the same things as when they were sighted. Cats are very good at forming mental maps of their surroundings and will use their whiskers to negotiate around obstacles. A few tips to making life easier for blind cats include the following:

- Avoid any sudden and loud noises. These can be especially frightening to blind cats
- Keep the food, water and litter tray in the same place at all times

- Avoid moving furniture as much as possible
- Leave the TV or radio on as much as possible especially when the cat is left alone for long periods. Do not move these around as the noise they emit will help blind cats orientate themselves in the environment
- Talk to them as much as possible. The sound of your voice will be reassuring and will help them place you within their mental map of the room
- If the blindness has occurred suddenly or you move to a new home consider confining the cat to a small area of the house at first. Make this the room in which they spent most of their time when sighted. When they are comfortable negotiating this room, gradually increase access to other rooms of the house
- Play is very important for blind cats. Use toys that make a noise such as rolled up kitchen foil or balls containing bells
- Before picking up blind cats, speak and stroke them first so they aren't taken by surprise. Put them back in an area where it will be easy to reorientate themselves, such as next to the food bowl, in the litter tray or on a surface with a specific texture
- Try to keep as much of the cat's lifestyle the same as when sighted. If they were an outdoor cat then consider letting them out into an enclosed yard. However, be sure that they cannot escape.

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