Kitness

Sphynx Intro Care Guide

You might be expecting what you've come to know as a typical domestic cat, but Sphynx are anything but typical. Their unique personality might be equated to a dog, squirrel, monkey, and even "Toothless" the dragon from *How to Train Your Dragon*, with ears going back during play.

Sphynx are not shy or timid. They stay very involved with you and keep you company in your daily movements, whether you are sitting down or think you can get privacy in the bathroom.

This Intro Care Guide was designed for those new to the breed. If you're in the process of welcoming a Sphynx into your life, you might want to grab a copy of my Final Notes guide with more in-depth information like the first few days, food and health tips, introductions to other pets, etc. Just ask and I'm happy to share.

This care guide is based on years of observations and opinions. However, I'm not your vet and these are my *opinions* only. I encourage research and a happy medium between you and your vet.

Nail Care

Trim your Sphynx's nails regularly—check at least once a week. **Always trim nails before bath time; your shoulder is usually the fastest escape route out of the tub.**

Sphynx love high ground, and sometimes that high ground is your shoulder. They can jump there straight from the floor, and if they misjudge the landing, those nails may be what keeps them from falling. You'll quickly understand why keeping them trimmed matters. 🩹

Keep nail beds clean. Gently push back the skin over the nail while pressing up on the paw pad to expose it. The easiest time to clean out that dark, oily buildup is right after a bath, while the water has softened it. Keeping this area clean is simply good hygiene and can help prevent yeast infections down the line.

Bath Time

Soaps: Read your labels and choose natural products that won't dry the skin or irritate the eyes. If you see skin irritation appear suddenly, **first** check to see what products you might have changed in the past week or so.

How often: Kittens tend to get oilier from food and mom's milk and should get baths a little more often. Doing so will also help get them comfortable in the water, making bathing over a lifetime easier on everyone involved. **As they grow and adapt, the traditional once-a-week bath is not mandatory.** Treat the situation like you would your own hair—the more you wash it, the more you need to.

Coat oil production varies by cat, by bloodline, and by diet. There are options to consider that can suit both your lifestyle and their needs. Water-based baby wipes or a wet washcloth can be easy alternatives to a full bath. Also, throwing down light-colored blankets where they frequently curl up will show you when skin oils begin to build up.

Ear Care

Much like bath soap, try to find products that have a more natural base, as alcohol and other chemicals can be irritating and overly dry the ear canal.

Wax buildup can create yeast infections in the ears, so proper hygiene habits are important to establish. **Note:** Sphynx produce a very dark, nearly black wax that is often mistaken for ear mites. Not that ear mites are impossible, but this is a common misunderstanding of the breed.

Eye Care

It's not uncommon for any cat to have some eye discharge, similar to you waking up with sleep in your eyes. With Sphynx, their watery eye discharge may even be tinged brown. **Note:** If the discharge becomes non-transparent or looks like an infection, talk to your vet regarding appropriate care.

Training

Sphynx are surprisingly trainable if you have the interest and patience to work with them. They're intelligent, curious, and quite capable of learning the rules of your home.

Cleaners & Fragrances

For laundry and cleanup, use products that help break down enzymes and sanitize without strong fragrances or oils. Some essential oils can be toxic to cats, so please do some research before using them to be safe.

Remember that a cat's sense of smell is far stronger than yours, and they'll be much closer to that floor you just cleaned, so keep that in mind when choosing the products you use.

Diet & Feeding

Make sure you note the diet your new Sphynx was on **when you received them**. Sudden changes in diet can be hard on their digestive system—and evident in the litter box. 💩 It is extremely important that you transition your cat slowly from their previous diet into your intended diet. Plan on adding small portions of the new diet every couple of days into the previous food for about two weeks.

Temperature

Sphynx love warmth and can get cold much more easily than a cat with a full coat. You don't have to keep your house at a specific temperature—just remember, **they're naked.** Make sure they always have warm places available, such as blankets or a cave-style bed, especially if you prefer to keep your home on the cooler side.

They also love soaking up the sun and may spend most of the day in a sunny window for heat if given the chance. Their naked skin can sunburn and even tan, so be mindful of prolonged direct sunlight unless your windows have low-E glass that reduces UV exposure.

A pet-safe heated bed or pad can be another option when you're around to supervise, but don't be surprised if you discover it's warmer than your cuddles and you've suddenly been replaced.

Don't freeze the naked cat. 🥶 *Don't bake the naked cat.* 🔥 *And don't take it personally when the naked cat chooses heating technology over you.* 🤪

Litter Boxes

There are many types of litter available on the market. What I use is dependent on the cat and the situation.

Please make sure you know what litter your new Sphynx was using when you received them in case they aren't immediately adapting to what you have purchased. In most cases, you simply need to show them the litter box by placing them in it a few times during the first couple of days.

Sleeping Arrangements

Decide early where you want your Sphynx to sleep and be consistent. **Don't start none, won't be none.** Let that little alien 👽 into your bed and you may never sleep the same again. 😩 💤

Sphynx love warmth, blankets, and being as close to you as physically possible. Remember, their normal body temperature is around 102°F—if you're already a hot sleeper, having a little furnace pressed against you all night may not be the cuddly experience you imagined. 🔥

Once your bed becomes *their* bed, renegotiating the arrangement may be harder than you think. If sharing your bed isn't your thing, give them a warm, comfortable sleeping spot of their own and establish that routine from the beginning.

Getting Ready: What to Have on Hand

- A comfy bed—cave-style is a favorite
- A soft blanket
- Your chosen **wet and dry food**, including enough of their current food for a slow transition
- Your chosen cat litter
- Toys—as many as your checkbook allows, or a milk ring. Up to you.
- A cat tree when you're ready—they love high ground
- Nail clippers
- Food and water bowls
- A cat brush... just kidding
- Shampoo
- Q-tips
- Ear cleaner
- A few healthy treats for training