The Ultimate Siamese Cat Secrets

How To Train
Your Siamese Cat

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Raising a Good Siamese Cat

Raising Siamese cats is a unique experience – even if you've been a cat owner for years, you will find a number of differences in your Siamese in comparison to other cat breeds. Unfortunately, some people who select Siamese cats as their family pets without understanding those differences are surprised to find that their cat is not the independent pet they had expected – and contribute to the somewhat unfavorable reputation the breed has gotten.

Choosing the Siamese breed means you should be prepared for a cat that is quite dependent upon their owner – they are not usually content to curl up on the back of the couch for hours, or hide under the bed the way many other cats will do. Instead, a Siamese cat is likely to be on your lap the moment you sit down, and to follow you around the house, “helping” you do chores and maybe “talking” to you along the way.

Siamese cats are known for being very vocal; with a meow that can rival that of any baby's cry! People who are unaware of this personality trait may decide this makes them a “bad” cat. As the owner of a Siamese cat, you may appreciate their vocalisation but still not want the cat to be as loud or meow quite as frequently. There are methods of training your cat to meow less frequently that are similar to teaching a child that whining and carrying on will not give them what they want – a Siamese can be taught that meowing excessively will not make you give them more attention or put more food in their bowl.

In fact, Siamese are very intelligent animals and can be trained to do a large number of things you wouldn't expect a cat to be able to do. Raising a good Siamese requires you have a solid understanding of the Siamese breed and how to leverage those differences to instill behaviours you expect from your pet.
Training Basics

Because Siamese cats are strong willed (stubborn isn't quite a strong enough term to describe the will of a Siamese cat!), training the breed takes some patience and understanding of their personalities. Whether you are attempting to train your Siamese to keep them from walking across your kitchen counters, or hoping to teach them “tricks” such as fetching the newspaper or using the human toilet – using appropriate training methods and principles will increase your likeliness for success.

There are 3 basic principles necessary for training Siamese cats:

1) Remember cats learn in the moment – not afterwards.

When trying to teach Siamese acceptable behaviours or how to do a “trick”, it's important to remember that cats learn at the moment of action. Many people try squirting their Siamese with water guns AFTER they've scratched the couch or jumped down from the kitchen table, and it's already too late.

When your Siamese learns the word “no”, you can get them off the counter or away from the garbage by telling them no but they'll probably do exactly what they wanted a minute later – after the “no” has passed.

2) You must be consistent in your training efforts.

It can be difficult to be consistent if your cat is jumping on the kitchen table while you're at work, or when you're in another room. By the time you hear them and come running, they've already gotten away with it and you're helping train them to know they can do what they want as long as they don't get caught!
If at all possible, you can improve and speed up your training results by spending a week or two home with your cat for training. This will enable you to be consistent for several days in a row and your cat will learn faster. You can train a Siamese cat even if you can't manage to take dedicated time for training; but you should expect it to take longer because of the lack of consistency. Whenever you are not around, your cat will have the ability to do whatever he or she pleases.

3) Use the environment to your benefit.

Using the environment will help you train your Siamese and is likely the most effective method you can use. It helps you to be consistent even when you aren't right there to correct the cat from the behaviours you're attempting to discourage. For example, Siamese cats don't like citrus scents. If you don't want your cat scratching on your sofa, spray it with a citrus scent and put in a scratching post near by. Is your Siamese sneaking on your kitchen counters while you're at work? Fill low jelly-roll pans with water and place on the counters – this will discourage your cats from getting on the counters.

For modifying Siamese behaviour, the environment is the perfect teacher. It's an immediate correction – it happens at the very moment when the cat performs the undesirable action, and you can sit back and reward your cat when they do the things you want them to do.

In fact – that's probably the most important key for training your Siamese cats, in addition to these 3 principle techniques discussed above, you will want to reward your cats when they do something you like. Siamese cats respond very well to positive reinforcement.
Training a Siamese Kitten

Training a Siamese kitten takes more time and patience than training a dog, even though they are extremely intelligent and aim to please their owners. You should begin training your kitten when he or she is about eight weeks old, although if you get your Siamese when he or she is older, don't let it prevent you from trying to train. You may not be able to 'teach an old dog new tricks', but an older Siamese is just as capable as learning as a kitten, although it may take a little longer.

Kitten Training Tips

**Litter box training:** Siamese cats have a natural instinct for using their litter box and most won't require very much litter box training at all beyond showing them where the box is once or twice. If your cat isn't using the litter box, try using a different kind of cat litter – often the problem is not the cat understanding the litter box, but rather not liking the particular litter you've chosen (the scent or texture). If you have an automatic litter box, the movement and noise may scare your cat and prevent him or her from using the litter box.

**Use Rewards Often:** Many cat owners fall into the habit of yelling at their cat when he or she is doing something wrong. Cats rarely respond to negative reinforcement. Instead, have a supply of cat treats handy and give out rewards whenever the cat is doing appropriate behaviours. You'll get a lot further in your efforts if you consistently reward good behaviour than if you are ready to punish for negative behaviours.

**Cats Need to Scratch:** Some Siamese cats start scratching your furniture, which makes owners understandably upset. What you should understand is that cats need to scratch in order to keep their nails healthy. Make sure you provide a scratching post or items that the cats are allowed to scratch – otherwise don't be surprised if your Siamese scratches everything in sight trying to find an area that he or she is allowed to scratch.
Behaviour Modification Techniques

Some behaviour problems with Siamese cats may be too far beyond the prevention stage that they will need treatment and modification rather than prevention measures. To modify behaviours of Siamese cats that are not acceptable to you, you'll want to select modification techniques that are appropriate for the type of behaviour you want to correct.

**Aversion** uses an obnoxious stimulus such as scents that Siamese don't like to keep them off counters, furniture or other areas that are off limits (e.g., hot pepper sauce, citrus scented perfume, "cat away" sprays, or "bitter apple.")

**Teaching avoidance** is effective for oral behaviour problems such as wool sucking or plant eating, as well as for teaching cats to steer clear from screens, doors, and furniture. Remember to be consistent and give the same command “no” each time the cat approaches these areas or begins the oral behaviour you want to eliminate.

**Desensitization** works well for managing fear or anxiety. First, expose the cat to things that are not fearful to them, and then you can gradually increase the intensity of the stimuli over time. If desensitization doesn't work for your Siamese, in extreme cases, the use of anti-anxiety medications are helpful in the initial desensitization process.

**Correcting Misbehaviour** is only effective when the cat is *caught in the act*. Cats are unable to associate their actions with the correction unless the two occur within minutes of one another. The cat must not associate the owner with the action; otherwise, the cat learns to avoid the behavior only in the owner's presence – which is why making use of the environment is extremely effective. Other effective methods for correcting misbehaviour are using a water squirt gun (if you can be consistent and do it at the moment of the event) or throwing a rattle near the cat during the misbehaviour to startle them. The cat does not
associate these corrections with the owner, but rather with their location or their current behaviour.

**Rewards** are used to encourage behaviours you want your Siamese cat to do. Cats respond well to positive reinforcement.
Siamese Training Tips

Training a cat is not the same as dog training, but you can teach your Siamese a number of skills or tricks that are useful with patience and consistency. The key is to start when the cat is a kitten, but it is possible to train older cats as well.

Here Kitty, Kitty

It's a good idea to start with the basics and teach your cat to come to you when you call them – just as you do with a puppy. When you try to train, you will want to have a supply of cat treats handy and choose a quiet area without a lot of noise and confusion to distract your cat. Decide on a command for calling your cat and be consistent - “here kitty” is common.

Sit down on the floor and call your cat with the command you've selected, using a happy and excited voice. When your kitten comes to you, praise lavishly and give him or her a treat as a reward. Wait for the kitten to move away, or get up and move to another area of the room yourself and repeat the command you're using to call your cat. Try this for about ten minutes at a time, but if the cat seems frustrated or bored before you reach ten minutes, stop training temporarily.

Ideally, you will repeat the short training sessions two or three times a day for a week. Once your Siamese has understood the “come” command, you can begin introducing new commands (“no” or “stay”) or other tricks like walking on a leash or using a crate.

Let's Go For a Walk

Teaching a cat to walk on a leash is a good idea in case you ever need to transport him or her. You can simply put the harness and leash on and walk the cat to the car and then to the veterinarian or wherever you're headed – without fearing that the cat will get away.
Start out by putting the harness on your Siamese cat and giving the cat time to get used to it. Don't restrain him or her at all just praise the cat and give favorite treats while he or she becomes accustomed to the harness. Encourage the cat to follow you by offering more praise and treats, and eventually you can attach a leash to the harness and lead the cat without him or her panicking or struggling to get away.

**Crate Training**

Teaching a Siamese cat to use a crate is easier than teaching them to walk on a leash. Put a blanket and a toy inside the crate, and praise the cat as you place him or her inside. Leave the cat inside the crate for three minutes, and then let him out. Don't praise or make a big deal when you let the cat out – only offer the praise as the cat goes in.

Each time you lead the cat into the crate, leave him or her in for longer periods of time, until the cat is comfortable in the crate for about two hours.

**Using the Door**

If you allow your cat to go outdoors, it can get frustrating when he or she learns to scratch and meow at the door for attention every few minutes, or o come back inside. You can train your Siamese to use the door without all the unnecessary meowing and to ring a bell when he or she is ready to come back inside.

Hang a bell from the door you want your cat to use at the cat's level. If the cat does not seem interested in the bell at first, put some catnip on the string of the bell. When the cat rings the bell, open the door and let the cat in to get the reward.

You can also purchase and install a cat door obtained from a pet store. The door allows the cat to come and go as he or she pleases. The doors can be installed inside your own door, or in a wall of your home leading to the outside. Once the door is installed, you'll need to train the cat how to use it.
Hold the flap of the door wide open so your cat can go in and out of the door. Put treats on both sides of the door to encourage the cat to move through the door. It may take some time for your cat to realize he or she can do this whenever, but he or she will eventually use the door on their own.

**Litter Box Training**

If you don't allow your cat outdoors, chances are you'll need to litter box train your Siamese to avoid surprises around the house. Cats are clean animals, and they use a litter box willingly because it encourages that cleanliness.

You should have the litter box available from the moment you bring your Siamese home, so that you can begin using it immediately. Purchase some cat litter from the pet store and fill your box.

Introduce your cat to the litter box and keep it in a place where your cat can reach it at any time. In other words, don't put it in a closet or room where the door is sometimes closed! Whenever you see your cat about to create a bathroom in some area of your home, immediately move it to the litter box. You really need to catch the cat in the act, sticking a cats' nose in their poo will not encourage them to use the litter box! Most Siamese can be trained to use the litter box in one or two days of consistent training.
Dealing with Aggression

Everything a Siamese cat does is unique and exaggerated. They get excited when they play and even more vocal and energetic when telling you they don't like something. At times, they may seem to be downright aggressive, attacking you when you're not looking or even biting.

You can deal with undesirable aggressive behaviour in the same manner as you would any other undesired behaviour. Use environmental and consistent training methods to stop the action. If it is a result of jealousy when you have guests over (very common for Siamese cats to become aggressive and/or anxious when their owners have company) – simply remove the cat from the situation by keeping him or her in a room with the door closed while you have company.

If the cat is aggressive toward other pets, you may want to keep them separated for a period of time, giving them a few minutes per day to attempt to become “friends”. Just like people, Siamese cats will not make friends with every animal it comes into contact with. If after several days of separation with short periods of time to “get to know one another” your Siamese remains aggressive to the other pet, you may need to contact your veterinarian for help. Your cat may have anxiety and aggressive issues that need to be medicated to keep under control.
Dealing with Response to Other Pets and Humans

How your Siamese gets along with other cats or pets is really more about your cat's individual personality than it is the breed itself. If you are introducing a new pet to a family that already has pet(s), it's a good idea to give the animals time to get used to one another. Keeping them in separate rooms for a day or two might help ease the transition. Try introducing them together for a few minutes each day, until they get along and/or tolerate one another in the same room.

Because Siamese cats become loyal to their owner(s), sometimes they exhibit bad behaviours when you have company over. If your cats meow excessively or bite your guests, or otherwise demonstrate anxiety when you have other people in your home, you should keep your Siamese cat in a room with the door closed. It will ensure the safety of your guests and keep your Siamese as calm as possible. Some cats simply cannot handle guests in the home no matter how often you have company over.
Coping with New Environments

Siamese cats are sensitive to changes in their environment. If you move to a new home, you will need to give your cat time to adjust to the new place. If he or she is crate trained, allow the cat to come and go from the crate whenever he or she wants. The crate may give him a sense of comfort in an otherwise scary environment.

With or without the crate, you should keep your Siamese in one smaller sized room at first, giving the cat time to acclimate to the new room. As the cat begins exploring the room more, you can leave the bedroom door open a crack to give the cat the opportunity to move out into other areas of the home. Just be sure to keep the litter box and cat food in the same room that the cat is starting in.

You can try burning lavender candles or spraying lavender scented room fresheners as it is known to have a calming effect.

If after a few days your Siamese does not seem to have adjusted to the new environment, you'll want to check with the veterinarian about reducing the level of anxiety the cat is experiencing. Spend as much time as possible with your cat during this adjustment period and see if you can get him or her to play – but don't force the cat to do anything because you'll only add to the stress the cat is experiencing.

It may take a week or more for your Siamese to get used to a new environment, but given enough time he or she will come around!