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If you want to know what your cat's age is in human years, you're not alone! Here's how to figure it out.

Written by [Caitlin Ultimo](#) ✓



Find out how old your cat is in human years. *Gina Cioli/i-5 Studio*

If you're crazy about your cat — or cats — we get it! Our pets make our lives better, and we'd do just about anything to ensure they live a long, healthy life. We may look into their furry faces and always see that little kitty who came home weighing only a few pounds, but they get older every year, just like we do. But, do they really? How do cats age in terms of human years and what can we do to keep them feeling as young as a spring kitten?

Cats do age more rapidly than humans.

"Most cats reach sexual maturity by 6 to 8 months of age and have reached full adult size and development by 12 months," says Stephanie Liff, DVM and partner at Brooklyn Cares Veterinary Hospital in New York. "Cats live for maybe 15 to 20 years, so their life span plays a part in the fact that their growth and development trajectory is accelerated."

While no one can say for sure, experts seem to believe that the first two years of a cat's life amount to 24 human years, and then they add 4 years to each year that follows. For example, a 7-year-old cat would be

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44 in human years.

Unlike the canine friend – OK, or foe – a cat’s breed doesn’t necessarily affect its life expectancy.

“Although there are certainly congenital and breed-related disorders that can cause cats to age more rapidly, there isn’t a true variation between different kinds of cats, if they are all healthy,” Liff says.

If you are unsure how old your cat is – say, if you adopted him once he had already hit adult maturity – there are some ways to estimate his age.

“Many older cats will encounter chronic kidney disease or hyperthyroidism as they age, but keep in mind that these diseases can occur in younger cats too,” Liff says. “Generally, if blood work indicates these changes, that is a fairly accurate indicator of advanced age. Furthermore, arthritis or dental disease can indicate advanced life stage, but that doesn’t mean you won’t see these occurrences in young cats from time to time.”

So, cats do age more rapidly than us, but is there any truth to the myth that they have eight more lives than we do? Well, no, we don’t have zombie cats running around. But they’re definitely pros at withstanding difficult conditions.

“I think cats are very resilient,” Liff says. “For example, they can tolerate falling from high heights much better than dogs and humans, and that may be what plays a role in the infamous belief that cats have nine lives.”

“Further though, many of my cats will appear healthy clinically in the face of severe disease and will recover from sicknesses that they clinically shouldn’t beat and that I can just define as miraculous,” she adds.

So how can we keep our cats kittens at heart?

“Regular proactive medicine, keeping your cat on high quality diets and helping them maintain a healthy weight will help manage age-related issues as they arise,” Liff says.

Try spending about 10 to 15 minutes playing with your cat a day. It wouldn’t hurt to break a little sweat of your own – I’m sure your cat wants you to have a long, healthy life, too! Setting up an indoor obstacle course with either store-bought scratching posts or a little homemade ingenuity is a great way to break up your cat’s routine and give him a new, fun activity. As he climbs and jumps, find your own way to interact with the course. It will be a great way to bond and good for both of you to get moving.

Our pet’s love lasts a lifetime. As pet owners, all we can do is make sure they are given the best opportunities to stay happy and healthy. If you’ve had your cat 20 years or just brought home a kitten, it’s the quality time the two of you share that counts – after all, age is just a number!

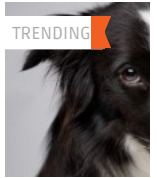
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