

The American Shorthair

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Background

The American Shorthair is a truly American cat! The direct ancestors of the American Shorthair were the first domestic cats to settle in the New World, traveling over with pilgrims on the Mayflower where they were used to catch rats and mice.

As settlement in North America increased, a lot of the imported European cats interbred. Eventually, a selective breeding program established in the early 19th century perfected the breed, which is now the eighth most popular breed in the United States.

Cat Facts

Here are some more interesting facts about the American Shorthair

- Along with the American Shorthair, the other descendant of the first domestic cats in America is the Maine Coon, which is a long-haired cat. However, the direct origin of the Maine Coon is not known.
- American Shorthairs can live up to 20 years
- The American Shorthair breed comes in over 80 colors and patterns
- The American Shorthair is a medium-sized cat, weighing in at 10-15 lbs.

What are they like?

American shorthairs are chilled-out, easy-going cats that are really popular with families because they are great with children. And while they can be calm, they're also gently playful, even through old age. Some are lap cats, but most prefer a bit more independence and aren't very needy.

Like many breeds, they're very curious and are especially intelligent. As a bonus, families with American Shorthairs love to have them around to hunt insects! Their original rat and mouse-hunting instincts have been retained over the years and they are very

effective at ridding households of all manner of pests. And as you might've guessed, American Shorthairs are also very athletic.

The American Shorthair is a hardy breed with almost no common health problems other than a few genetic weaknesses such as a serious heart disease called [hypertrophic cardiomyopathy](#).

Right for you?

The American Shorthair is a great breed of cat for people who have the time to spend with one. Here are some things to think about if you're thinking about welcoming one into your home:

- **A lazy cat equals a fat cat!** Some American Shorthairs like to lounge around, and that makes them prone to obesity and the health problems that come with being overweight.
- **Hunting.** Although they are great at hunting and killing pests like spiders and other insects, they also hunt less desirable critters. If you don't like the idea of your cat turning up on your step with a gross dead animal in its mouth, you might want to look for a different breed!
- **Grooming is really easy.** The fur of American Shorthairs is short, close-lying, and lustrous, and it is dense enough to protect against the elements. A weekly combing is usually all that is necessary to keep the fur clean and healthy.

If you have any questions or concerns, you should always visit or call your veterinarian - they are your best resource to ensure the health and well-being of your pets.