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HOW TO RECOGNIZE AN EMERGENCY

15 HOUSEHOLD HAZARDS TO AVOID

American Curl

ALL AMERICAN BREEDS

American Shorthair

American Bobtail
American Wirehair



CATBREEDER

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MEET
AMERICA'S SWEETHEARTS:
THE AMERICAN BOBTAIL,
AMERICAN CURL,
AMERICAN SHORTHAIR
AND AMERICAN WIREHAIR.

The cats next door look as diverse as the people who own them. Whether you fancy bobbed tails, curled ears, kinked coats or striking tabby patterns, these all-American breeds will bring a touch of the good ol' USA into your home.

The Unique American Curl

The American Curls in Karen O'Brien's home take playtime seriously. In fact, the cats' acrobatic antics rival those of many professional athletes. "They actually have some fierce athletic abilities in all the double flips and extremely high mid-air twists and turns they do when chasing their favorite kitty tease," explains the former breeder from Plano, Texas. In fact, her cat, Barclay, can push himself off walls with a mid-air leap and twist. "Sometimes I think he is simply entertaining himself."

When playtime ends, however, her cats are just as happy to follow her around the house, "supervising" all her activities. "American Curls are the 'everywhere doing everything' breed of cat," O'Brien says. "They must be helping you with whatever you are doing at home."

These personality traits often lead fans of the breed to describe the cat as "dog-like," noting the cat's loyalty and

affectionate nature as other endearing characteristics. Caroline Scott's American Curls will wait by the door for her to arrive home and often roll over on their backs for tummy rubs as soon as they see her. "Any contact is great contact for a Curl," says the New York City breeder. "They show their appreciation by

... looking up with that quizzical sweet face."

And what a face it is. As its name implies, the American Curl boasts uniquely curled ears. "The charming curled ears with those long ear tufts accentuating their swept-back look give [the cat] a happy, surprised expression of excitement and joy," Scott explains.

The American Curl also features a medium-honed, rectangular-shaped body complemented by a long tail. "Tail fur is a lot longer and fuller than the body fur," Scott says. "They walk around proudly displaying it fanned out, straight up in the air most of the time."

And while the American Curl's tail features long luxurious fur, the rest of the medium-length coat requires minimal grooming. "The fur is fine and silky, flat lying with no undercoat, so there is minimal matting or shedding," Scott explains.

O'Brien reminds owners to pay regular attention to the cat's ears, gently cleaning them to remove any wax buildup. She cautions owners to be careful when using cotton swabs so as not to push the wax down farther into the ear canal.

Most importantly, Scott and O'Brien recommend that potential American Curl owners be prepared to spend plenty of time with the cat — and be prepared for the affection the cat will show in return. "They are always purring whenever you pet them or when they sit in your lap,"

O'Brien explains. "They are simply little love bugs!"



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PHOTO: ERIC ISSELEE/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM



The American Curl is known for its unique ears.

The Easy-Going American Bobtail

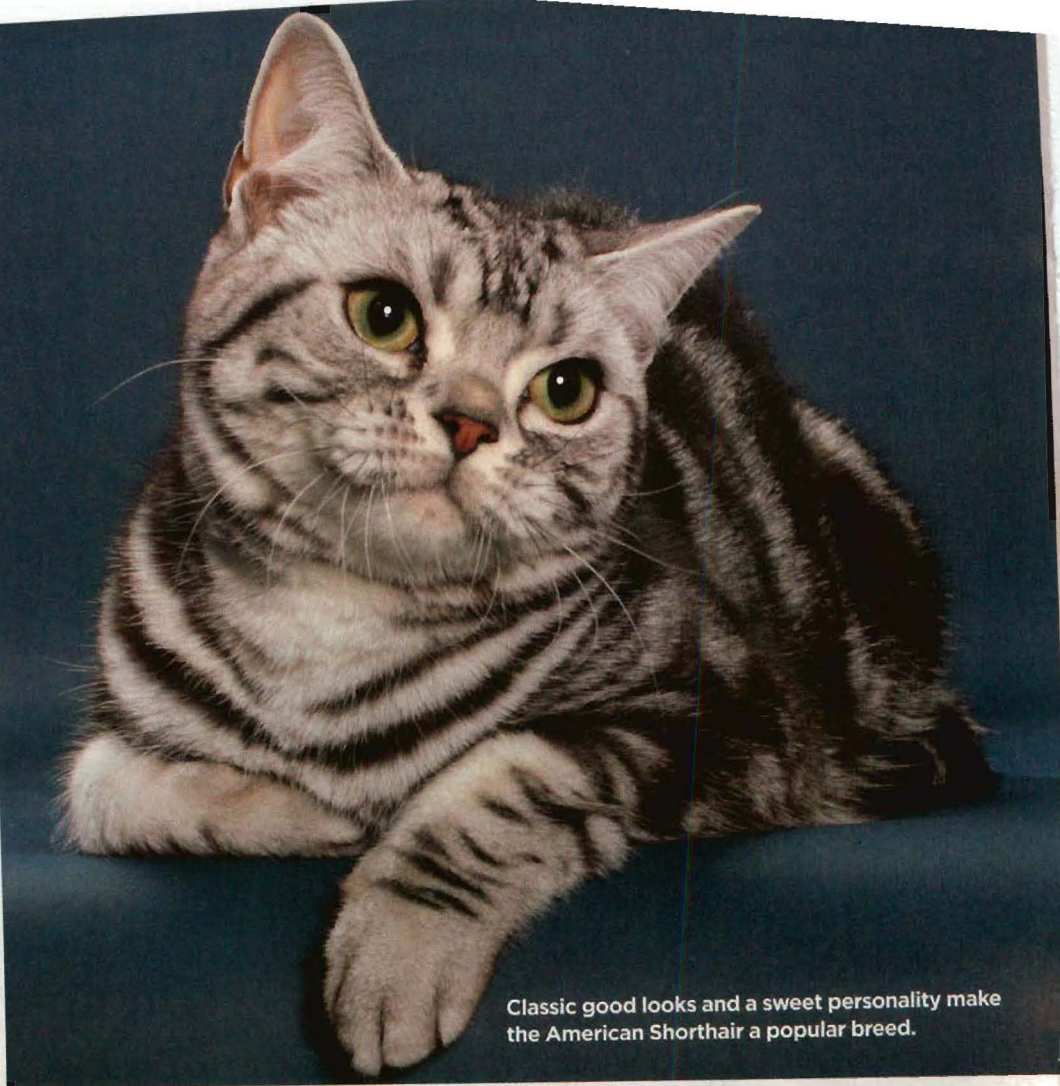
With a gentle touch of a paw or a quiet chirp of greeting, the American Bobtail lets its family know of its simple affection. "This breed accepts their owners without being vocal or demanding," says Bonnie Charvat, a breeder from Sevierville, Tenn. "They will adopt the whole family, including the dog or other cats. They are not usually a one-person cat."

While the breed may not try to sit on your lap, it will make its presence known by following you around the house, sitting next to you on the couch or curling up at the end of your bed. "American Bobtails are extremely loyal and loving companions," says Lorna Friemoth, a breeder from Columbus, Ohio. "The American Bobtail does whatever it can to make you happy."

Combine the cat's winning personality with its unique good looks, and it's no wonder the breed has won the hearts of cat lovers. From its humble start in the Western United States in the 1960s, the American Bobtail has charmed cat lovers with its bobbed tail, as well as its slightly wild appearance enhanced by either a long- or shorthaired coat. "They are a wonderful alternative for someone who is looking for a cat with a wild appearance without wild blood," Friemoth says, noting that the breed comes in almost all colors and patterns. "The most common colors are tabbies or lynx points." The International Cat Association accepts the classic, spotted, mackerel and ticked patterns.

Just as the American Bobtail's coat color can vary, the breed's bobbed tail can come in a range of lengths. "Bobtailed kittens can be born with no tail all the way to having a full tail," Charvat explains. And while the tail can come in different lengths, TICA's standard for show-quality cats calls for one that is "short, with a minimum length of 1 inch actual bone; may extend to the hock but not past it."

Whether it has a show-quality tail, the American Bobtail fits in well with all types of households, breeders say. "I have [placed] cats that travel with retirees and go RVing across the country," Friemoth says, noting that the breed does well with children because of its easy-going nature. "They love homes with dogs and other cats, or are fine as a single pet."



Classic good looks and a sweet personality make the American Shorthair a popular breed.

The Sweet American Shorthair

There's one thing people who live with an American Shorthair know: This lovable cat is the life of the party. With its all-American good looks and sweet nature, the breed naturally attracts attention, no matter what the occasion.

Diane Rogers, a breeder from Normal, Ill., shares a story about two retired show cats she placed with an older couple. When the couple hosted a large holiday gathering soon after adopting the cats, they decided to keep the cats in a quiet bedroom during the party. "Shortly after the 35-plus people had arrived, most of the children had disappeared and, soon after, so had several of the adults," Rogers explains, noting that a search of the house turned up nothing, "until they heard laughing and giggling from the front bedroom. When the door was opened, there were most of the children and some of the parents, playing with the cats!"

Why do people naturally gravitate toward the American Shorthair? Breeders credit the cat's personality. "They are wonderful buddy cats," explains Leslie Herman, a breeder from Williamsburg, Va. "They are not hyperactive or too sedentary. They love to be with their people, be involved in their activities."

This moderate, affectionate personality makes the American Shorthair an ideal companion for all types of families. As Herman simply states, "If you are a cat lover, this breed will fit."

The American Shorthair has been fitting into families for hundreds

**WATCH AN AMERICAN SHORTHAIR KITTEN
BEING JUDGED AT A CAT SHOW AT
CATCHANNEL.COM/EXCLUSIVES**

of years, since European settlers brought domestic cats to the shores of America. The hardworking shorthaired cat evolved through the years into what is today known as the American Shorthair — one of the most popular breeds in the cat fancy.

Classic good looks contribute to that enduring popularity. Breeders describe the cat as medium in size yet powerful and solid. This substantial body is complemented by a short, broad face with a square muzzle and round, expressive eyes.

Striking colors and patterns add to the American Shorthair's appeal. "They come in solid colors, classic and mackerel tabbies, and shaded patterns, white and bi-colors," Herman says. "In fact, with the combinations of colors and patterns, there are more than 100."

The breed's colorful shorthaired coat requires minimal grooming, though the cat will enjoy the attention. "My cats love to be groomed," Rogers says, noting that her cats also love playing with water.

In fact, the American Shorthair remains inquisitive and frisky throughout its life. "The American Shorthair will continue to play up into its old age," Rogers adds. "If curiosity is the sign of intelligence, the American Shorthair is very intelligent indeed!"

The Playful American Wirehair

Their fur has been compared to brillo pads and steel wool, based on a quick look at the dense, wiry coat. Make no mistake, however; the American Wirehair is just as soft and cuddly as any domestic cat — and maybe more so.

"American Wirehairs have what I consider to be the ideal personalities, present in almost every kitten born," says Virginia Wight, a breeder from Macon, Ga. "They are lap cats, love to be held, are tolerant of almost everything, including children, and tend to make a nuisance of themselves in general."

Some of that adaptable, personable nature may come from one of the American Wirehair's foundation breeds — the American Shorthair. Though the American Wirehair originated as a spontaneous mutation in a litter of kittens in upstate New York in the mid-1960s, breeders keep the rare breed healthy and hearty by using American Shorthairs in their breeding programs. A playful yet gentle personality remains a hallmark of both breeds. "Their personality is universally pleasant and outgoing, sweet and very people-oriented," Wight says. "If you don't want a cat sitting on your stomach while you do sit-ups, you don't want this breed."

Not surprisingly, many people want this breed because of its loving nature — and its distinctive coat. Information on TICA's website describes the fur as having several degrees of wiriness, "varying from spiked to curly with individual hairs being crimped, hooked or bent. The ideal coat, including the whiskers, is dense, coarse and crimped over the whole body."

The unique coat comes in all colors and patterns, according to TICA. Because the wired coat can be brittle, Wight says no particular grooming chores are required for it. She notes that the breed can come with a straight coat, which would require the same grooming attention as any other shorthaired breed.

While it may not need special grooming attention, the American Wirehair will thrive with regular and frequent attention from its family. Playtime is especially appreciated, though Wight notes that her cats can turn almost anything into a playful adventure. "I have one kitten who chases the floor piece as I vacuum," she says. "If I am wearing shoes that tie, I can count on the laces being untied."

Still, she wouldn't have it any other way. "Their tolerant, outgoing playfulness makes them great pets," she says.

With sweet personalities, natural good looks and quirky traits, these all-American breeds win over hearts around the world. Consider adding one of these American-made cats to your home. 🐾

Stacy N. Hackett writes frequently about cats and other pets. She has a special affection for the Cornish Rex breed and any cat with red tabby markings.



The American Wirehair is a loving and outgoing breed.