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Yes, I Adopted a Cat—But She’s Done Her Share of Taking Care of Me, Too

By Nicole Wills
UCF Forum columnist
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Stevie, the columnist’s first cat, has provided lots of companionship—and some unexpected challenges.

Growing up, I was one of the only kids I knew who never owned a pet. Well, I did raise a couple of betta fish over the years, each named after players for the New York Giants. Nonetheless, I always longed for a furry friend to call my own.

I promised myself that I would adopt a dog as soon as I graduated from high school. But when the time came, it was obvious that it wouldn't make much sense to take on the responsibilities of pet ownership and college life at the same time. I put off adoption for one year, then two, then three.

As time went on, adopting a dog began to make less and less sense. After all, being a full-time student balancing a part-time job with on-campus leadership was already quite time-consuming. I resigned myself again to a pet-free life, at least until after college.

But that all changed when I spontaneously decided to adopt a kitten. It wasn't something I had considered before, and the decision didn't exactly stem from an epiphany. Quite the contrary: I was inspired by a [Taylor Swift Instagram post about her new cat](#). Besides the fact that her cat, Benjamin Button, is exceptionally adorable, Swift's post made me consider just how perfectly a cat would satisfy my desire for a cuddly friend without the intense responsibility that a dog would bring.

I knew I wanted to adopt a kitten so I could raise the perfect companion for me. What I *didn't* know was just how hard it would be to find my ideal kitten. Summer is known as "kitten season," which means that shelters are basically overflowing with kittens for adoption. But I was set on a very specific type of kitten—a female tuxedo—so that significantly narrowed down my options. I signed up for every shelter mailing list I could find and spent my mornings and evenings scrolling through Petfinder and AdoptAPet.com. I also stocked up on all the necessary supplies because I knew as soon as I found the right kitten for me, I would have to jump at the opportunity.

One day in May, I got an email about a tuxedo kitten with an extra splash of white on her face. Her bio had everything I wanted in a kitten: 8 weeks old, friendly, cuddly and ready to go home ASAP. I quickly submitted an application to adopt her and was thrilled when I was approved to meet her the next day.

Right away, I knew she was the perfect kitten for me. From the moment I first picked her up, she was a nonstop purring machine. Luckily for both of us, I was able to take her home that day. Naming her was the easiest part: Stevie, in honor of Stevie Nicks, the mystical queen of Fleetwood Mac (and one of my favorite artists of all time).

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As prepared as I was for a kitten, Stevie has still thrown her fair share of challenges my way. Taking care of a tiny creature whose life is entirely in your hands is a huge responsibility, and in many ways I've had to restructure my life around her. For example, I no longer sleep in without a care because Stevie is up and at 'em as soon as the sun rises. Kittens require near-constant supervision and plenty of interaction, so I can't leave her alone for more than a few hours. And when she wants to play—well, good luck ignoring her.

That all might sound inconvenient, and maybe to some it might be. But Stevie has brought so much positivity and light into my life that I couldn't even begin to complain. I've found that I actually love waking up earlier, and even though I can't leave her by herself for too long, I don't want to, anyway. I know she'll be old enough to stay home alone all day in a matter of months, and I want to enjoy her time as a kitten as much as I can. She's nearly doubled in size since coming home, so time is certainly flying by!

I couldn't be more thankful for Stevie's companionship. Doing homework is 10 times more pleasant with a purring kitten on my lap—even if it takes a bit longer because she likes to interrupt for playtime. I've never been the soundest of sleepers, and I used to have a hard time even sleeping through the night. But the comfort of Stevie on my pillow is more than enough to help kick some of that nighttime anxiety.

Even though it took me a little longer than I planned to become a pet owner, I can't help but feel like it all worked out the way it was supposed to. Stevie is the furry companion I've always dreamed of and I'm so glad I found her when I did.

I'm still new to this whole pet ownership deal, and I'm definitely figuring it out as I go. But I know for sure that Stevie and I are in it together.

I might have adopted *her*, but she's done her fair share to take care of me too.

Nicole Wills is a University of Central Florida junior in the Burnett Honors College studying advertising-public relations, political science, and writing/rhetoric. She can be reached at nwills@knights.ucf.edu.