



**January is officially "National Bath Safety Month"**  
([http://www.mgh.org/trauma/bath\\_safety.html](http://www.mgh.org/trauma/bath_safety.html))

Of course the focus is on creating a safe environment to bathe your child, not your cat. But I could not resist in offering my own feline twist.

The key to a successful cat bath is knowing your cat well enough to be gentle but remain firmly in control during the process. If your cat really does not need to have a water bath, avoid it and opt for cleansing cloths or even a warm wet wash cloth. Why put yourself at risk while making your cat mad?!

1. Make sure you have everything you need close at hand. Choose a good bathing spot. Perhaps your deep kitchen sink, your utility sink, or a bath tub.
2. Supplies could include thick towels, cat shampoo, cups or mugs, and a mat at the bottom of the sink/tub to prevent slipping.
3. Wear clothes you don't mind getting wet and have extra towels nearby.
4. Start with two to three inches of body-temperature water -- just enough to come up to kitty's belly. Not too hot, not too cold. The trick with my cat was having the water at the perfect temperature she'd not realize she was getting wet. If getting wet totally freaks your cat out, you may want to re-evaluate and try the warm, wet cloths.
5. Use one of the cups to warm the shampoo by mixing the appropriate amount with warm bath water.
6. Staying calm in action and voice, place your cat into the water and begin lathering. Avoid your cat's eyes. Here's where another person would be great because your cat will be convinced you are inflicting some horrible harm and escape may be the only option. We've all seen those photos and YouTube videos of cats and baths. Let's hope your cat will not be the next star.
7. Be firm but gentle as you finish the bath. Rinse with cups full of warm bath water or use a nozzle (making sure the water coming out is warm). Be sure all the soap is rinsed away.
8. Using your hands to squeegee the excess water away before wrapping your cat in a towel. Blot as much water as possible. Change towels and repeat.
9. Your cat will probably want to be left alone to "clean" away the remaining water and dry. Arrange for this to happen in private in a warm bathroom with the door shut.
10. Above all, praise your kitty with a calm, loving voice throughout the entire process and especially when your cat emerges dry, clean, and beautiful. You may get the cold kitty shoulder, but at least it will be a clean one.

Of course, bathe your cat at your own risk. Even the gentlest cat can react poorly. Follow instructions on the shampoo you choose. And make sure all soap is rinsed away.

By Kathy Covey, CAT PR Manager

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