

HANDLING WITH A PURPOSE

1. Be firm and decisive with each cat. Hesitancy makes frightened cats think that there is indeed something of which to be afraid, and convinces aggressive cats that you can be intimidated.
2. Do not drop cats on the table or allow them to fall or dangle from any scratching pole attached to the table.
3. Once you have each cat on the table, gauge your handling of it on the cat's mood. Most cats prefer the least possible handling on the table. A frightened cat may need to be kept on the table. An aggressive cat needs to be distracted. Only call for the handler in the cases of extreme need. If the judge always calls for a handler, when a cat is difficult, it teaches the cat that difficult behavior will be rewarded by handling by the owner.
4. The judging table is for the cat, not for paperwork, flats, pencils, spray bottles, etc. If you need to elevate your paperwork, bring a collapsible table with you or look for something in the show hall that can be used.
5. Give each cat the same amount of attention if possible. Every cat deserves to be fully judged. The exhibitor may come up to you later and ask you to evaluate their cat, and if you gave it only a cursory look because you knew you were not considering the cat for breed, you may not remember it later.
6. If you believe there may be a structural problem (tail, sternum, testicles), do not continue to go over and over it. If you feel it twice, it's probably not going to disappear (the opposite situation applies to testicles....)
7. Show the cat off to its highest potential. **REMEMBER**, this is a cat show, not a personal showcase for you.

NOW YOU ARE IN THE JUDGING RING-WHAT DO YOU DO?

Handling with a purpose, you are here to evaluate the cat against its standard, don't miss an important aspect of it's breed.

When you're judging cats, you have a job to do.

Think about the body style of the cat you will be handling, and the techniques you will use to handle, and allow the cat to look its very best.

Approach the judging in cage of the entry you are going to examine and announce yourself, either tap your finger on the cage or talk to the cat making sure they are aware you are there.

Do not hesitate, get the cat out on your first attempt. Otherwise, you are telling the cat, you have no confidence in your handling ability or you are transmitting fear.

Get the cat out of the cage rear first with support, one hand under the chest and the other right in front of the back legs, making sure you support the cat well.

If an Oriental/Siamese style cat, stretch the cat gently but fully and on the bias, so you don't have a mid-torso droop—it puts too much pressure on their spine.

If a moderate body style like Abyssinian, Russian Blue, gently semi-stretch the cat. You can get cues on handling these moderate SH breeds by watching a group of breed owners bringing their cats to the ring.

If a substantial/massive body style, support chest and rump without stretch to get the cat from the cage to the table. Long LARGE cats such as a Maine Coon might look good stretched, but they are so large its not advised to handle them in a stretch.

Be careful with your fingers, do not get them too far between the front legs so the cat can reach down and nip your fingers.

While you are carrying the cat from the cage to the judging table you are already judging the cat, evaluating the weight, muscle tone and perhaps even checking the tail or testicles.

When the cat arrives on your table, it is not playtime.

That feather you have is a tool or a reward to the cat that should be used after you examine and evaluate the cat.

If a cat is desperately frightened, and you are trying to distract, use a small feather or a toy with slow movements.

If you use a huge glittery toy with fast movements, you're liable to terrify an already frightened cat by quickly, shaking any sort of toy at the exhibit.

Try to develop a routine that you use every time.

OPTION #1

Start at the nose, head, profile, eye set/shape/placement/color, ears size/shape/placement, chest, legs, torso, then hindquarters, tail, testicles (for males), coat and color/pattern, evaluating each characteristic as you go. Look at the entire cat as it stands on your table taking in how all the pieces fit together harmoniously.

OPTION #2

Start at the shoulders, chest, legs, torso, hindquarters, tail, testicles (for males), coat and color/pattern, then finish your evaluation with the head-- nose, head, profile, eye set/shape/placement/color, ears size/shape/placement. Look at the entire cat as it stands on your table taking in how all the pieces fit together harmoniously.

Doing the same order every time, will ensure you do not skip a step. You can then get the toy out as a treat, and one last look at the cats relaxed expression.

Support the cat fully (or stretch cat on a slight diagonal) on the way back to the cage, being careful to not face it toward the other entries sitting in your judging ring cages.