



HOW TO CONVERT A CAT TO RAW FOOD

BY MADELEINE INNOCENT

cover image - Merlin trying to scoop out the tiniest morsel of raw meat left after his tame human had minced up the week's meaty meals. I use mince because of the competition - if they eat it fast it is more likely to stay down!

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INTRODUCTION

Changing anyone's diet is a pretty major undertaking. Or can be. Imagine bringing up your kids on fast food, then suddenly realising the error of your ways. Don't imagine for a moment, converting them would be easy.

Some cats adapt really really easily, almost with a thankful air of "what took you so long?" attitude. Others are more stubborn. This is for the more stubborn ones:)

This information is not about what to feed your cat. I have already covered that extensively in my work, [Naturally Healthy Cats](#). The information here is to help you through the process of changing your cat's diet.

BUT FIRST, YOU have to be convinced this is the right thing to do.

If you aren't, you won't stick it out. And your cat will pick up on your lack of certainty and figure there is something wrong, so won't cooperate.

In my experience, that's the BIGGEST hurdle in the whole process - YOU!

You don't have to be 100% on board. But you do need to be aware of the damaging effects of commercial cat food and you do need to want to do the best for your cat.

This is the same as the current western diets being damaging to our own health. A healthy diet for us is also one of the main tenets of returning and maintaining our own good health.

This is not for those who opt for the easy path of simply opening a packet or can.

This is for those who are changing their own diets for better health. Who understand and appreciate that diet is one of the main keys to good and lasting health.

To convince your cat, you need to put your money where your mouth is:) Cats pick up on the lack of authenticity really easily, as do all animals.

Over the years of helping people take this challenge, I have found that the following process is the most helpful. Some people and cats move faster than others, so can happily skip steps. This is the long version, just to make sure nothing is left out.

WHY CAN IT BE DIFFICULT TO CHANGE A CAT'S DIET TO RAW FOOD?

Cats are fussy eaters for a reason.

In the wild, cats don't eat carrion as dogs do. They only kill and eat. So the raw food must be very fresh. If there is the slightest hint of decay, they will refuse it. They can't handle spoiled meat, so won't eat it. It's a very simple and very effective strategy.

Much of even human grade food is not very fresh. Strategies are applied to keep the meat on the shelf as long as possible. Chicken is one meat that spoils easily. So that is often washed in chlorine. No self-respecting cat will eat that. This seems to be lost in cooking, which may be why cooked chicken is more palatable for many cats.

Generally, the organic or free range chicken won't have been washed in chlorine.

Obviously, meat sold for pets have even fewer hygiene rules. That may be fine for dogs, but not for cats.

That means sourcing your food is critical.

Chemical Addictions to Entice Eating

Because most commercial cat food starts off with stale and spoiled meat, the manufacturers know they have to somehow convince cats to eat it. Artificially flavouring food has become a dubious art and a lucrative industry. Not only can this override a cats natural instincts, it can create addictions.

Converting from commercial to raw food too quickly can be similar to us going cold turkey from an addiction. It's hard.

Doing it slowly normally provides better results. This requires us to be patient and determined. So often, we are in a hurry.

Being Unsure

When we doubt something, we influence those around us. Our thoughts and feelings radiate from us and animals pick them up easily. Even we can, and we are much less sensitive than cats and other animals. Have you ever walked into a room and felt the energy, making you feel nervous? Or comfortable, at ease? It's coming from the collective thoughts and feelings of the occupants.

So spend time discovering why raw is the healthiest food for your cat. When you are fully convinced, you'll be determined. Then your cat will pick that up. And THAT will make a big difference.

Pulled in Many Directions At Once

We are a funny lot:) We chop and change readily. We're easily distracted. That may not always be a bad thing. But my suggestion is not to shop around and try a lot of different ways at the same time. It can become confusing and that's when we give up. Give one method a good try. If it really doesn't work for you, if you have explored, and I mean REALLY explored, all the different options and it still doesn't work for you, then you can move on.

I believe these four areas represent the most common hurdles to changing the diet.

Tips to Help in The Conversion

Here are a few tips to encourage a cat to eat good quality, fresh raw food when they aren't used to it

1. sometimes very slight cooking or warming will emit an aroma which is attractive. Do avoid microwaves as these destroy so much nutrition. Taper this warming off as the food is accepted.
2. most cats love yeast. The British eat Marmite, the Australians Vegemite. Another similar one is Promite. These are yeasty (but also salty so be cautious). Smearing a little onto the food can entice them to eat. If these aren't available, you can sprinkle a little brewers yeast on the food, or mix a little in. Taper this off as the food is accepted.
3. most cats love oils. By adding a few drops of a good quality oil, such as cold pressed saffron oil which seems to suit cats the best, some will find this irresistible.

Nutrition Content And Quantity

Commercial cat food is non-nutritious and inappropriate for cats. So a large quantity is recommended that will at least fill the cat up, if not satisfy them.

When you are feeding good quality raw food, you are feeding them REAL food, which is very nutritious. It is satisfying their needs. So you don't need to feed them much - certainly a lot less than commercial cat food.

Two 2oz (2 level tablespoonfuls or 60 grams) meals a day is enough even for an active outdoor cat, and certainly enough for an indoor-only cat. Cats are meant to be trim, slim, lithe and agile. Their movements are sensual.

An even better option is half the above plus half a chicken wing or a whole chicken neck.

Overweight cats are very unhealthy. They are never overweight in the wild.

A varied diet is appreciated.

THE FIRST PART

Lets start with the worst scenario - dry food is the only food you feed your cat and it is left out all day.

First Step

Take the food up and only put it down twice a day for a short period, perhaps half an hour. And only the amount needed. Cats are carnivores. They don't graze, as do herbivores.

Do this for a week or two, until you both get used to it.

Second Step

Now add a little canned food, perhaps a teaspoonful, and mix it in with the dry food. You may have to experiment with different flavours and brands to find out what your cat prefers. Some prefer fish, for example.

If this is eaten, increase this daily, while reducing the dry, so that at the end of a week to 10 days, the full meal is the canned food.

If this is not eaten, stick to a teaspoonful of wet food, while reducing the dry food by an increasing amount over a week to 10 day period. This means there will be less and less food each day, so your cat will become more hungry. This will tempt most cats to eat the wet food.

Cats, like people, won't starve themselves. They just need time to adjust. To use an analogy, I've heard that prison food is not very good. But prisoners still eat it as that's all they have.

Discard the food not eaten and put out fresh each meal. Cats will not want to eat stale food. Your dog or the wild birds may eat it without coming to any harm.

You may be able to skip this part and go straight from dry to raw, rather than dry to wet to raw. It depends entirely on your cat.

Third Step

Now your cat is eating only wet food, and twice a day, start to substitute some of the wet food with a little very fresh, good human quality, meat mince. I feel chicken, duck, turkey, lamb and goat is best. Ones to avoid are factory farmed chicken (which is washed in chlorine to extend its shelf life and cats won't touch that).

Only buy very fresh meat, human grade, with the best date from a good quality supermarket or butcher.

Only keep the mince in the fridge for a day or two. Freeze the rest in portions and thaw daily.

Repeat as in the second step but substituting the wet food for the raw food over a period of 1 - 2 weeks.

Experiment with different meats.

And if you only have one cat or they don't steal from each other, you could try diced meat instead of minced, which encourages chewing.

Once your cat is eating all raw meat, give yourself a huge pat on the back. You have probably achieved the hardest part.

Fourth Step

Get into the routine of buying, preparing, freezing and thawing the foods that are in balance - ie good quality, fresh, muscle meat plus organ meat.

Allow up to a month if necessary. You need to feel you have mastered this and everything is now just routine. I suggest you don't leave it longer than a month before embarking on the next stage for two reasons:

- 1 - you'll get complacent and stuck
- 2 - this is not a completely balanced diet yet

THE SECOND PART

This is where we introduce the boney meal. This will replace one of the meals.

First Step

Make sure your cat likes chicken before embarking on this.

Purchase some chicken necks or chicken wings (not legs). Divide the chicken wing into two parts - the drumette, and the middle with end piece. Keeping one back, freeze them individually to thaw out as needed.



Dice the neck or half wing into smallish pieces using a cleaver (be careful of your fingers).

At the next meal, when your cat is expecting food, give them a piece of the diced boney part. If it is accepted, give another piece and another, until it's all gone.

If it is not accepted, try smearing it with a little brewers yeast, marmite, vegemite or promite, but be careful as the salt content is very high.

If this is not accepted, withhold the meaty meal for about an hour if time permits.

Try again tomorrow with a fresh piece of boney chicken. As in the first part, if the cat holds out, reduce the amount of the meaty meal, so they are getting less and less and are more tempted to try the boney meal.

Once it is accepted, add more, a little at a time. Go at the pace of your cat. Don't be impatient.

Caution! - if your cat has mouth inflammation, they may not be able to eat the bones as it may cause more pain. So this needs to be addressed first. I suggest you consult a good homeopath or homeopathic vet you know and trust. Stomatitis and gingivitis are chronic conditions and need knowledgeable prescribing and support to truly heal it.

If your cat has had all their teeth removed, they may still be able to eat the cut up pieces, after healing. The palate hardens and they mostly swallow them whole, but it is still beneficial to their health.

Note

If your cat finds it hard to progress through the stages, stay at the one stage they can cope with, a bit longer. After a week or two, try again. Keep pushing them gently. Don't give up.

Second Step

Once the cat is eating all the cut up boney pieces in place of the meaty meal, then gradually increase the size of the piece. Do this slowly over the period of a week or two, as your cat adapts.

While they may have swallowed the small pieces whole, they will have to crunch on the larger pieces, which is what we want.

You're home and dry when your cat can happily, *and enthusiastically*, grab the whole neck, or half wing, and crunch up on that, making short work of it.

My cats jump up at me, to get at their boney chicken. I know how a tree feels... It's the high-light of their day.

This is definitely another time to celebrate.

Obviously you can change things to suit you both. Some older cats may need more time. Generally, the younger the cat, the faster they adapt.

Addendums

NB1 Please note that fasting is good for everyone. It is also a natural part of life for a carnivore. Hunting is not always successful. Cats can go several days without food and come to no harm (perhaps be more cautious with obese cats). So don't be alarmed if your cat decides to fast. It is an excellent way to focus on something more important, such as de-toxing or dealing with an ailment. Digestion takes up a lot of energy, so cats will naturally fast when they need to. And the need may be strong when they can, at long last, de-tox from all the chemicals in commercial cat food.

NB2 Some people get alarmed at the detox symptoms that inevitably follow a conversion to a raw diet. You need to EXPECT them.

Toxins must find an outlet and they come out in a liquid. So EXPECT to see vomiting, diarrhoea, discharges from any orifices, skin eruptions or an exacerbation of an existing problem.

In a young cat these may pass almost unnoticed. In an older cat, they may be last a week or more. If the conversion is slow, they may be mild. If it's fast they may be intense, but over quickly.

It's always a comfort to have a knowledgeable practitioner to hold your hand during this process. Mainstream vets don't understand the process and are likely to compound the problem with drugs.

Additional support

Please appreciate that although vital in returning and maintaining good health, a healthy, balanced, raw diet is not always enough. Other factors contribute to poor health such as toxins, stress, accidents, frights, injuries, the genetic inheritance and more.

Good homeopathic treatment is probably second to none in its ability to de-tox and return vitality and health. To anyone. From any problem.

If you would like further information on this and on cats general health, or would like to contact me, check out my website - <https://naturalcathealth.com>

I also treat people, and dogs, and...
<https://twolegsandfour.com.au>