

Pet Play

✘ Introduction

Pet play is a form of role-play in various BDSM, D/s and other kink practices. This can be engaged in within a given scene, but is more commonly found as an aspect of D/s and other power exchange relationships. The participants can adopt just about any animal affect as their “pet” personality. For the purpose of this writing I will often site forms of kitten play as an example.

This is not intended to be definitive, comprehensive, or prescriptive. Rather it offers those exploring this dynamic a starting point for their investigation and trial.

General

Pet play is a style of role-play which typically involves one or more players adopting roles as animals which are domesticated pets such as bunnies, puppies, kittens, and such. Note that it is common, but not to the exclusion of such, for pet players to be younger versions of the chosen animal (i.e. a kitten versus a mature cat). Typically the Dominant is the Owner of the pet and the submissive is the one who adopts the animal like characteristics. In this way, pet play can be very much like or nearly identical to D/s, M/s, and TPE relationships.

Please note I am making a distinction between Pet play versus other types of animal play. For example, where both parties assume predator/prey roles as part of a hunting scene as in types of Primal play. Certain types of animal play may focus on humiliation and shaming, which is not the purpose of this writing. It is therefore wise to avoid insisting on absolute

or clear delineations when looking at the broader category of Animal role-play. Not all types of animal role-play are pet-play, and vice versa.

Human vs Non-human or Animal Pets

A major distinction in pet play is whether the submissive is a human or animal pet. Again, the human pet is typically a submissive or slave that is “owned” by their Dominant. As such, a human pet may or may not necessarily wish to exhibit any animal like behaviors, but rather favors the spirit of being a pet (being kept and taken care of, sleeping at feet or lap, being petted, leashed, crated/caged, etc). The difference between a slave and human pet may be semantics, or the pet adopting some animal like behaviors most attuned to their personality.

Non-Human or animal pets, on the other hand, more fully embrace a creature’s attributes. Like a slave, they also are under far more control of their Owner than in other types of submission. A pet’s adopted identity can range from domesticated pets (cats, dogs, rabbits, etc); wild animals (foxes, deer, wolves, Panthers, etc); livestock (horses/ponies, cows, pigs, sheep, etc.); and even mythical or fantasy beasts (unicorns, dragons, pokemon, and just about anything the imagination can summon).

Animal pets players often attempt to leave as much as their humanity behind, however there is a very broad spectrum left up to the pet, and some may desire a “softer” transformation which isn’t as comprehensive. Those who adopt their animal roles to the fullest will often utilize elaborate costumes and props including full suits, masks and hoods, gloves or mitts, and a variety of prosthetics to assist with the transformation process.

Of course, any role-play is up to the participants and therefore the degree of said roles can be adopted in any

matter of style.

Roles & Relationship


An example of pet play are those who adopt roles as animals which the player relates to and is allowed to embrace within a given scene. The submissive may be a cat (or kitten), a fox (or kit) and engage with their Top in a way that is more openly playful, mischievous, non-verbal vocalizing, being led, caged, given to nipping/biting, etc. Those that enjoy a more possessive experience of Owning their pet (or of being a kept pet) approximate many aspects common to power exchange relationships and enslavement. This includes but is not limited to set behaviors, formalized training, rewards/consequences, etc. Overall however the experience is often about deepening the pet's submission and sense of ownership.

In either instance, the focus is typically about adopting some degree of the non-human behaviors and engaging through play and the kind of closeness one would feel with any well-loved household pet. Pets like being cherished, loved, petted, cuddled, as well as played with. Feeling taken care of and being protected is often at the core of submission, and pet play is no exception.

Pet Behavior

When actively being the pet in kitten play, a submissive may meow, purr, curl up in a box, tease, scratch, teethe or bite/nip, and exhibit other kitten like behaviors. Meanwhile the Dominant will engage by playing with their kitten, give love and affection, train them, reward them for being good, and discipline them for being bad. Again, depending on the animalistic behaviors or traits adopted, those behaviors will emerge one way or another.

Outfits & Costume

It's fairly common for many pets to dress-up in order to take on some physical attributes. In kitten play this can  be complete with ears, collar (with bell), paw mittens, leash or leads, fluffy arm or leg warmers, etc. Tails are typical and often vary between simple pin-on variations to those which are a part of an anal plug. One may go even further with use of costume makeup, cosmetic contacts, and even dental prosthetics for fangs. Switches and brat pets (naughty kitty) may don talons or claw gloves for more aggressive play. However, not all kittens dress up; a pet may simply assume select characteristics.

Many pets will choose to forgo the more elaborate animal styled costume and instead wear lingerie or whatever makes them feel sexy, but still act in pet-like fashion. Again, it's up to the individuals involved as to what works for them (or doesn't).

Training

Training your kitten might include things like having them being hand fed, drink from small bowls (without hands), sleeping in a crate or special bed, performing certain "tricks", and other typical pet training activities. Such activity in pet play often involves elements of humiliation, especially for discipline and punishment elements of training. A good or well trained pet will often feel that they are, ultimately, cared and looked after by their Owner. This sense of safety and security only reinforces a submissive pet's desire to please and submit. *Note: If you are considering pet training, it's wise to develop a more formal system of reward and punishment (see my earlier posts on Correction, Discipline, & Punishment).

Props & Toys

Aside from the costuming aspects, gear your pet might enjoy could include a ball, yarn (or rope), laser pointer, cardboard box or bags, wrapping tissue paper, feather wands, squeak toys, stuffies, etc. It's up to you how you want to play and what props or gear makes the most fun and rewarding experience. Depending on the nature of your pet and the extent of transformation, consider a pet bed, crate, or indoor pet tents. I've found many pets crave a space that feels safe, protected, and a place to hide in their "safe space".

Food & Treats

If you are looking to include feeding as part of the play, please bear in mind that only human food should be used, as safety standards and certain ingredients used in pet food are not healthy for human consumption. As a recommendation, foods for your kitten pet might include bowls of milk, canned tuna, sashimi, soups, and various cereals (perfect as kibble). Treats, which are especially good for general rewards and incentives in training, might include things like goldfish crackers, teddy grahams, pretzel nuggets, gummy fish, and others. If there is a favorite finger food or snack your pet gets excited about, that could make an excellent treat.

Rewarding

Feeling actively loved, cherished, and protected is what most pets crave. In return for their obedience, the Owner can provide special attention through focused time and attention through pampering and "quality time". This might include having the pet in your lap to be stroked or petted, brushing & grooming them, gentle tickles and light play, being hand fed, etc. There may be special "reserved" treats or small rewarding gifts just for such times.

Confinement

Elements of pet training often include some element of traditional BDSM slave training. This includes being crated/caged, chained, tied up, put on a lead, being bound, etc. Use of restraints and confinement is one way to reinforce Ownership and submission, which can be used within scenes, as methods of punishment, or just to solidify the feel of being a kept pet. Example, having a kitty crated might be a good way to help them calm down if they feel it's a safe and secure space, or having the pet tied to a lead at your feet reinforces submission and placement. However, please use confinement and restraints with safe, sane, and compassionate care.

Important note: Confinement and Bindings is not something done indefinitely or even for the majority of their time. Leaving the pet confined or bound for a prolonged period of time, or unattended, poses serious physical and emotional risks and would be abusive. I have seen examples of pet play bindings whereby the Owner secures their pet's arms (forearm to upper-arm) and legs (calf to thigh) which creates an acute angle of the joints. Left in place for any prolonged period of time* cause (1) damage to the joint and tendons, (2) nerve impingements, (3) reduce blood circulation, (4) risk of forming clots (DVT, or deep vein thrombosis), to more serious health impacts.

**time depends on overall level of fitness, prior injuries, and any other underlying physical or health factors.*

Exhibitionism

Some people enjoy public demonstration of pet play. Indeed, there are types of animal play which may actually require it. It's up to all involved to consider their goals and limits with exhibitionism, objectification, and humiliation. It's

not uncommon to see a pet in the dungeon or at a fetish event being playful with their Owner, or having a Pony competition with their Trainers jumping hurdles or pulling carts/chariots. For some, going out in general public on a lead might be exciting, but can seem like a better idea than it is in execution. For example, there can be unanticipated feelings of shame or public consequences. Ensure this is thoroughly discussed and is addressed in a responsible fashion that can be both fulfilling yet respectful of local laws, culture, and which does not risk either party's professional career.

Ownership

As mentioned before, some form of pet play can be quite casual or focused on select role-play within a given scene. However others can approach those of stricter M/s and TPE (total power exchange) relationships of consensual enslavement. Those being considered as kept or Owned pets are property of the Owner, which may involve relinquishing all rights and possessions to their Owners care and discretion. In such circumstances I strongly advise that the submissive consider their measure of trust and ensure there is a provision for a safe exit and release where assets are returned in the event the relationship sours (potentially minus costs associated with the upkeep of the pet during their time).

Sex

Saving this for last, because sex may or may not be a part of pet play at all. Indeed, pet play can be entirely non-sexual, focused more on scene interaction or just closeness than actual sex. If sex is to be a part of the dynamic, it's important to state whether the pet's mode is to continue in non-human or human aspects.



Finding and Nurturing a Pet

So how do you find and nurture an Owner/pet experience? Like any relationship, it's a matter of getting to know and become comfortable with one another. Often a submissive will disclose (often via instinct) which animal they most closely identify and how they enjoy to express themselves or connect. As a prospective Owner, I advise being upfront and clear that this is something you either desire or are looking to explore. I strongly advocate all parties putting all cards on the table to demonstrate respectful open and honest collaboration in building a dynamic, versus subversion or manipulation.

Another way of finding/developing your pet side is for the submissive to be trained as a pet in the form of the animal which the Dominant feels is the closest nature to the submissive innate behavior. This method requires there be significant time for the Dom and sub to learn about each other and to observe key behaviors that seem most suitable. The better the fit, the better your chances for success. The submissive may need to explore and change their animal roles from time to time in order to feel out which seems best. The Dominant may need to provide the sub with the parameters of behaviors most like that animal, or allow the sub to do their best and use experience to enhance your understanding of their inner nature and help guide them on that path.

Examples of animal roles and behaviors:

- **Kittens** – affectionate, playful, nocturnal, laying on lap, napping in confined spaces
- **Pups** – energetic, loyal, playful, eager to please, simple commands, doing tricks, laying at feet
- **Foxes** – energetic, mischievous, excitable, playful, nippy, highly expressive
- **Cows** – docile, lactation, loves nipple play & milking,

being led/tied, kept in stocks, etc

- **Ponies** – extravagant gear, highly trained, loves to be paraded, enjoys competitions

Contract?

Establishing a pet contract, especially those who are going to be exclusively owned, is a great tool to formalize your goals and limits within the relationship. While discussion is always required, a contract offers the opportunity to compare ideas, needs, limits, etc. Thus I typically recommend use of “soft” contracts, documents that serve to foster mutual understanding. This avoids communication gaps, mixed signals, and potential contradictions which can undermine a relationship.

- Consider your mutual and individual roles and goals, do they align and agree? Are there potential show stoppers?
- What are the limits each participant have? Will this leave someone feeling unfulfilled?
- Jot down windows of opportunity to engage so as to allow for the Owner/pet dynamic to flourish reasonably, while also noting exceptions that account for necessary “vanilla” situations.
- Roughly set out intentions, like a road map, of progression (assuming things go positively), but remain adaptable to the reality at the time.

Considerations

It's important not to assume but instead have in-depth dialog about what being a pet, or caring for a pet, means to you. Conversation and writing your understandings is a great method for ensuring you are on the same page. The risk is potentially caring for a “bad kitty” when you want a good and playful kitty, which will kill the joy in play and put a significant dent in a relationships foundation.

Lastly, bear in mind that each pet (be they human or animal based role-play) will have different personalities and thus behave differently, and for their own unique reasons. Some may enjoy pet play because they get to leave their human troubles behind and just be petted, while others see it as a reason to be mischievous (pulling toilet paper out across the room) or flat out bad (knocking off things and breaking them). Some may enjoy this as their primary mode of interaction, or just for a given scene. Each person has their own way of expression, interaction, and engagement. As such, each relationship dynamic and individual will have their own interpretation and is unique to those involved. Be open, discuss respectfully and mutually collaboratively, and you are likely to build something much more enduring and fulfilling.

– Sir Vice

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