

Introducing A Cat

When you already have cats as part of your family, introducing your newly adopted cat can seem like an overwhelming task. Patience is key—the transition can take several weeks, but by planning ahead you can reduce some stress, allow for an easier transition, and build a positive relationship between your feline companions.

Check out these 4 easy steps to help introduce your new cat into your household!

Step 1 – The First Few Days

- You should isolate your new cat in a separate room with his own food, water, litter box, bedding, and toys.
- Bring familiar items from the adoption location into the separate room in order to make this room smell comforting and “homey” to your new kitty.
- If there are other cats in your home, this first step allows both cats to first get used to the scent and sounds of the other cat without risk of confrontation.
- Be sure to spend a lot of time with each cat or group of cats individually.
- Keep his cat carrier open in the room as well so your cat has a place to hide and can become familiar with the carrier for future veterinary visits. When you allow your cat to become familiar with his carrier, it can help reduce the stress and difficulty of getting your cat into the carrier when you need to transport them to the veterinarian’s office or on a trip.



Step 2

- Once all your cats in the home seem relaxed, gradually start to move the food dishes closer to the door that separates them. If any stress is noted, go back to the step where they were comfortable and work more slowly.
- You can also use a toy for them to play with under the door when they are calm and hopefully curious.
- If your cats are calm, take a cloth/blanket to wipe one cat and then put that cloth in the room with the other cats. Do the same for new and existing cats, so that the others can smell the cat in their area.
- If this is comfortable to all cats, you can also mix the scents on one cloth, wiping first one cat, then the other.
- Remember to reward all calm behaviors with treats and praise in a soft voice.
- When your cats are comfortable with the steps above, it is time to try a brief and safe interaction. This can be done by opening the crack of the door an inch so that both cats are safe, but can start to see each other.
- If one cat hisses or tries to attack, close the door, back up the process, and restart more gradually.
- Sometimes it can be helpful to distract your cats with food.

Step 3

- When all is going well, place your new cat inside a carrier and allow your other cat(s) to explore by seeing and smelling your new cat more closely in a safe environment.
- Continue to reward calm behaviors with treats and praise in a soft voice.
- If your cats are harness and leash trained, this is another option you can try.

Step 4

- If your cats seem comfortable in this environment, the next step is to try placing them in the same room with direct supervision.
- Start introductions for brief periods to help make it more likely that these experiences will be positive.
- Remember to be patient and go back a few steps if necessary, and gradually re-introduce.
- If you have any concerns, contact your veterinarian.
- Once your cats have been successfully acclimated, remember that each cat still needs their own resources, often in different locations, such as food, water, bedding, and litter boxes.



Few Final Pieces of Important Information

- It can still be overwhelming to acclimate a cat into your home even if you do not have other cats.
- As your new feline companion becomes more comfortable, he will be more likely to explore and test the boundaries.
- You should always check for potential hazards in your home such as poisonous plants, full-length curtains, fireplaces, breakable objects, etc.
- The more prepared you are, the smoother the transition can be.

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