

INTRODUCING A NEW CAT

When you first get your new cat home, pick a room and set your new cat up there. If there are already cats in residence in your home, pick the room of least importance to the established cats. Provide a litter tray, water and food, and toys, provide a couple of cosy holes for the new cat to curl up in, preferably one up high. Your new cat will need to have a couple of weeks in this room to get used to the smells and sounds of your home. You should try to spend a little time in this room each day so the cat can start to build a relationship with you as well.

If you have a multi-cat household, exchange bedding between the cats, so that they can start to get used to the smell of each other. After about a week limited interaction may occur under the door between the new cat and the established cats.

Begin to allow the new cat access to more of the house. In multi cat households, this is best done when the established cat is not around. Allow the established cat to explore the room where the new cat has been.

After two weeks you can bring the new cat into the area where the established cat is in a carrier. Feed both cats during this short interaction to help reduce stress. Continue doing this over an extended period of time moving the established cats bowl closer to the carrier each time. When the cats are eating happily side by side it is time for short, supervised, direct interactions to begin during feeding. Following this, allow cats to walk around and sniff each other. Reward friendly behaviour with treats. Gradually increase the supervised time together.



Do not leave the cats together unsupervised until several supervised interactions without aggression have occurred. The process of introducing a new cat may take several weeks. Older cats may need a quiet space away from kittens for an extended period of time. Friendly, well-socialized cats may adapt to each other rapidly. Pheromone products may ease the introduction, but should be used in conjunction with gradual introduction.

To prevent the occurrence of toileting problems in multi cat households it is wise to have one litter tray per cat and one extra. Locate the trays at different points throughout the house, so that any cat will be able to find a clean tray to use without fear of being surprised by another cat.

