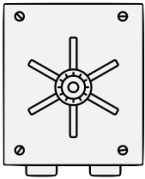


Bringing Your New Cat Home

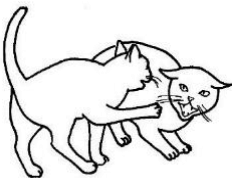
Bringing home a new cat can be fun and exciting for the whole family. The key is to do the introduction to the new home and any existing pets slowly and carefully. Here are some tips to help make a successful transition to the new home!



The Safe Room

For many cats, transition to a new home is difficult. Setting up a safe room can ease this transition. The safe room can be an office, small bedroom, or bathroom. Cat-proof the room and set it up with the litterbox and food and water, along with a bed or sleeping area where the cat can hide.

Once your cat is set up in the “safe room”, spend some quiet time with him/her. Always respect the need for your cat to have rest and solitude; never force an interaction. If the cat is hiding and scared, give more time. If the cat is confident, coming out to greet you, eating well and playful, s/he is ready to explore more of the home. If you have other pets, wait to introduce the new cat until s/he has acclimated to the safe room.



Cat-to-Cat Introductions

1. **Safe room:** When your new cat is in the safe room, feed the two cats on opposite sides of the door. This will associate something positive (eating!) with the sounds & smells of the other cat.
2. **Swap scents:** Scent is a common and important way for cats to communicate. Switch sleeping blankets or beds between the cats so they have a chance to become accustomed to each other’s scent.
3. **Switch living areas:** Once your new cat has adjusted to the “safe room”, let your new cat have free time in the house while confining your resident cat(s) to the new cat’s room. This switch allows your animals to experience each other’s scents without a face-to-face meeting. It also provides the newcomer a chance to become familiar with his/her new surroundings without being frightened by the other animals.
4. **Avoid fearful/aggressive meetings:** Avoid any negative interactions. If fearful or aggressive interactions are allowed to become a habit, they can be difficult to change. You can expect mild forms of these behaviors, but don’t give them the opportunity to intensify. Deter or distract them with treats, toys or by separation.



Cat-to-Dog Introductions

1. **Practice obedience:** Even if your dog already knows these commands, work on strengthening them so when faced with a strong distraction such as a new cat, your dog will obey.
2. **Controlled meeting:** After they’ve become comfortable with each other on opposite sides of a door, you can attempt a face-to-face introduction in a controlled manner. Put a leash on your dog, and using treats, have your dog either sit or lie down and stay. Have another family member or friend enter the room and quietly sit down with your new cat on opposite sides of the room. Repeat this process until both the cat and dog are tolerating each other’s presence without fear, aggression, or other undesirable behavior.
3. **Let your cat go:** Next, allow your cat freedom to explore your dog at her own pace, with the dog still on-leash and in a “sit- or down-stay.” Meanwhile, offer your dog treats and praise for calm behavior.
4. **Positive reinforcement:** Although your dog must be taught that chasing or being rough with your cat is unacceptable behavior, s/he must also be taught how to behave appropriately, and be rewarded for doing so. If your dog is always punished when your cat is around, and never has “good things” happen in the cat’s presence, your dog may redirect aggression towards the cat.
5. **Supervise:** You may want to keep your dog on-leash and with you whenever your cat is free in the house during the introduction process. Be sure that your cat has an escape route and a place to hide. Keep your dog and cat separated when you aren’t home until you’re certain your cat will be safe.