

Socializing Shy or Nervous Cats

Shy cats can make wonderful companions, but need a special home that is willing to give them patience, time, space, socialization, and extra love. Some shy cats may not be used to being inside a house, or may just need to be out of the scary shelter environment before they are relaxed enough to show you their loving personality. Shy cats benefit from owners who will gently and quietly hold, stroke, and brush them. Don't let these shy cats fool you though, they would love to be your companion and have a safe place to call home!



Start with a Small Space

Transition is stressful for any cat, but take a shy or nervous cat and you've got a major, life-changing event. Take it slow. Set up the cat's "safe room" with food, water, litterbox, and plenty of places to hide. Your new cat may need to remain in this room for several days or weeks depending on individual progress.

Try a Little Tenderness

Give a shy cat attention, but on his/her own terms. Talk to your cat in its hiding place – perhaps even feed in there if he/she doesn't come out to eat. Give your cat space, but offer reassurance with your words, tone of voice, and actions, and let him/her know you mean no harm. Be patient.

Don't Force the Issue

Let a shy cat build confidence on their own timetable. If you try to drag your cat out of its safe spot and force attention, you may actually make your cat more shy – or risk injury.

Gradually Increase the Environment and Exposure

Once your new cat starts coming out and greeting you when you enter the "safe room", begin opening the door to the "safe room" each day to let your cat out to explore. Your cat may also enjoy exploring after the lights have gone out when nobody is around. Grant your cat more and more access to your home, but always allow access back to the "safe room".

Remember this process may take weeks to months and your shy or nervous cat may always run for safety during social occasions- but when the coast is clear s/he will be back to provide plenty of love and companionship!