



Friends of Homeless Animals Advice Sheet

Introducing A New Cat to Your Cats

Your resident cat may feel stressed at the addition of a “stranger” into his/her midst. And your newly adopted cat is likely to be stressed at the newness of EVERYTHING – new home, people, smells, cats. Yikes! Here are some way to alleviate the tensions and make a smooth transition for your new cat and your present feline friend.

1. Have a room in your home set aside for your new cat. Have everything ready that he/she will need – litter box, food, water, toys, a bed. This will give kitty a safe haven and a place where you can spend time with him/her one-on-one.
2. You will notice that in a short period time your cat will come up to the door of the newcomer’s room to see what’s going on, sniff, and maybe even put a paw under the door. This natural tendency can be optimized at feeding time. Feed the present cat and the newcomer near either side of the door to this room. Don't put the food so close to the door that the cats are too upset by each other to eat. This will help start things out right by associating something enjoyable (eating) with each other's presence.
3. Switch sleeping blankets between the new cat and resident cats so they have a chance to become accustomed to each other's scent.
4. Once the new cat is using its box and eating regularly while confined, let it have free time in the house while confining the other cat(s). This switch provides another way for the cats to experience each other's scent without a face-to-face meeting. It also allows the newcomer to become familiar with its new surroundings without being frightened by other animals.
5. It's finally time to meet. You will get a sense for when both cats are ready. Another trick – and I know it sounds strange, but it works! – wipe each cat down with a dryer sheet. Now they smell alike! It can ease the introduction process. Let the cats come together on their own terms. Don't pick up Fluffy and “force” her to meet the new kitty. They will work it out together at their own comfort levels.



6. Monitor the cats' interactions when you are there. Keep them separated at first when you are not home. When you feel that they are comfortable with each other, leave them out together with full run of the house for a short period of time – maybe while you're gone to the grocery store or out to dinner. You'll see whether or not they feel comfortable enough with each other yet to be left alone the whole day. You would hate to have a disaster occur when you're at work for 8-9 hours.
7. Avoid any interactions between the cats which result in either fearful or aggressive behavior. If these responses are allowed to become habit, they can be difficult to change. It's better to introduce the animals to each other so gradually that neither cat becomes afraid or aggressive. If either cat becomes fearful or aggressive, separate them and take more time in the introduction process.
8. Expect some hissing, spitting, growling, or even swatting. Unless they are injuring each other, they will work out the situation. Keep a spray bottle handy or, if the cats get into a tussle, throw a towel or blanket over each cat before picking them up and separating.
9. Consider a second litter box and food bowl. Fights can occur over having to share food. And you want to make sure both kitties feel the litter box is sufficiently clean. More "contributions" to the litter box when you have more than one cat, and you don't want someone eliminating outside the box because it's not as clean as they'd like.