

How To Introduce A Cat To A New Home

- The amount of time it takes a cat to settle into a new home varies from case to case. Some cats may take a week; others may take months, depending on the individual personalities.
- Fearful cats usually do best in relatively quiet homes. They are not suitable for young children as children can easily scare them with loud noises or sudden movements.
- Many cats who come to us slowly become more confident as they get used to their living space and daily routine. Going to a new, strange environment can throw some of cats off and cause them to regress at first. However, if you follow the procedures outlined in this handout this should only be temporary.
- Start by confining your cat, preferably to a small room, ensuring that your cat cannot hide in any inaccessible places (e.g. under the bed). You should provide hiding places that are easily accessible and comfortable. Be sure to place the litter box within easy reach of your cat, but away from food and water.
- Keep your cat confined until he feels comfortable in the room and doesn't hide any more. Let him explore the rest of the house gradually (too much territory all at once may be overwhelming). If at any point during this process he regresses, confine him to his "safe" room for a few days and start over by only allowing access to one room at a time.
- If you have other pets, do not introduce them until your cat has bonded with you and is reasonably comfortable in the home. At this point you may also start to slowly introduce your cat to other people, but be sure not to overwhelm your cat.

Tips That Will Help To Bring Your New Kitty Out Of Her Shell

- Always talk softly and move slowly around your cat. Avoid staring at him since this can be perceived as a threat. It helps to get down to your cat's level when interacting with him instead of towering over him.
- Food can be used as a bonding tool by feeding at scheduled times instead of leaving food out all the time. This will help your cat make a positive association between you and the food. You can also approach your cat with a small food treat to make friends (don't go overboard with treats. You don't want to ruin kitty's figure...).
- Never attempt to pull your cat from his hiding place or force him to be held. This will increase his fearfulness and may even result in bites or scratches. When he is ready he will come to you. Until then, gently pet him in his hiding place.
- Encourage play with interactive toys (e.g. cat dancer, fishing pole type toy), but make sure that the toy you are using is not big and scary. Some cats are very play motivated and regular play sessions can help bring them out of their shell and out of hiding.

- Try not to startle your cat. If you have to do anything noisy in the house (e.g. vacuum, moving furniture, having a dinner party), confine your cat to her “safe” room.

Why Are Some Cats Fearful?

Fearful behavior in cats can be caused by various factors. Insufficient exposure to humans and/or a variety of stimuli during kitten hood as well as traumatizing events in their lives can teach them to react fearfully towards people or new situations. Cats can also be genetically predisposed to being fearful.

How To Establish A Trusting Relationship

Many fearful cats bond to their caretaker(s) and make wonderful pets but retain shyness with strangers and hide when people come over.

Patience and understanding are essential with fearful cats. They will give you plenty of love and purrs in return!

We carry a wide variety of cat toys and treats at The Calgary Humane Society store, drop by and pick up some fun toys for you and your cat!

Fascinating Felines is seminar offered at The Calgary Humane Society, it discusses how cats communicate and why they interact the way they do. Videos and pictures will help educate about the subtle signs our feline friends give to tell us their intentions. You will learn all about what makes tabby tick! Please visit our website at www.calgaryhumane.ca and look under the Training/Behaviour tab and then under Courses/Seminars for more information.

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