

Introducing Cats

Creating a Feline Friendship

1: Set up Home Base for the New Cat.

Set up a bathroom, large closet, or spare bedroom for your new cat to start in. The room should be quiet but somewhere the entire family can access. Food, water, litter, toys, a scratching post and a bed should all be in this space. If possible, place each cats food bowls close to the door. This is a great way for the cats to form positive associations with one other.

3: Have the Cats Swap Spaces.

If both cats are eating well and appear relaxed on their sides of the door, try making a larger scent exchange. Confine the resident cat in the room, while the new cat is allowed to roam. Both cats should use the other's beds, bowls and litter box. Only exchange the cats themselves.

While the new cat is exploring your home, you may want to close bedroom and bathroom doors to limit access. You can open more spaces over time; slowly increasing the amount of space the new cat has access to.

5: Let them Meet.

If both cats are relaxed, eating, drinking and using the litter box as normal, then it's time to take down the gates. There may be some hissing or swatting, but cats often will work things out by themselves. If the cats seem to tolerate, ignore, enjoy or interact with each other - that is great news!

2: Allow Scent Introduction.

Exchanging scents is an important step in the introduction process. Doing this before meeting face-to-face can help reduce stress of the initial meeting. Take a towel, blanket or bed from your resident cat's space and place it in with the new cat, and vice versa.

4: Allow Visual Contact.

If both cats are relaxed, eating, drinking and using the litter box as normal, you are doing great! Now you want to open the door separating the two cats, but have a gate blocking so they can see and smell one another.

A baby gate typically works well, but you may want to stack two on top of one another. Continue feeding both cats on their respective sides of the door, and continue switching them back and forth.

6: When to Leave Them Alone.

It is a good idea to separate the cats at first when you will not be around to supervise them. You want to ensure that you see all their interactions and know exactly what is going on. After you feel that the cats are getting along, you can ease up on this step.



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