



HOW TO INTRODUCE A NEW CAT

Move onto a new step only when both cats are comfortable; revert to previous step if there is any anxiety. Proceed with caution and take your time: Cats can take up to year to accept each other.

<div><input type="radio"/></div> <div>Create a Safe Room</div> <div>Allow 72 Hours</div>	<p>Create a private space for your new cat.</p> <p>Provide essential resources: food, water, litter box, scratching post, and bedding.</p> <p>Provide other enrichment items: toys, hiding spots, climbing areas.</p> <p>As long as your scent is strong in the room, it will help your cat become comfortable in the new environment. You can ensure your scent is strong by giving your new cat one or more article of your unwashed clothes.</p> <p>Make sure your new cat can't see the rest of the house from its safe room.</p>
<div><input type="radio"/></div> <div>Swap Scents</div>	<p>Place a clean sock on your hand and rub your new cat's face to collect facial pheromones. Place the scented sock in your resident cat's area.</p> <p>Place a clean sock on your hand and rub your new resident's face to collect facial pheromones. Place the scented sock in your new cat's area.</p> <p><i>Other exchange items: condo, bedding, litter, toys.</i></p>
<div><input type="radio"/></div> <div>Swap Sites</div>	<p>Put your new cat in a carrier, carry the carrier to a closed room in another part of your house, and shut the door.</p> <p>Allow your resident cat to walk into your new cat's safe room and then close the door behind it.</p> <p>Allow your new cat to explore the rest of the home.</p> <p>This will allow the opportunity for key cat landmarks to acquire a shared scent.</p>



WANT TO IMPROVE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN YOU AND YOUR CAT?

Find answers to your cat's behavior from the comfort of your home through my services. I offer educational content, Q&A chats, webinars, classes, and consultations to solve your cat's behavioral needs. Contact me at allisonhelpscats.wordpress.com

<div><div></div><div><div>Feed on the other side of the door</div></div></div>	<p>At mealtimes, set up feeding bowls on either side of a closed door.</p> <p>Place bowls far enough apart so your cats can walk up, eat, and walk away without incident, but close enough that they can sense each other. Decrease the distance each feeding as they become comfortable.</p> <p>Use only a small amount of food. Increase the amount as the cats become comfortable with each other.</p>
<div><div></div><div><div>Play peek-a-boo</div></div></div>	<p>Install a baby gate or a screen door between the safe room and the rest of the house.</p> <p>Open the door wide enough for the cats to see each other.</p> <p>Return the bowls to their original positions, where the cats can see one another and eat with no disruption.</p> <p>Open the door a little more each feeding as the cats become comfortable with one another.</p>
<div><div></div><div><div>Add playtime</div><div>Best with two people</div></div></div>	<p>Begin by playing with your resident cat in the main living area of your house. Make sure your cat is engaged, and keep it moving with a toy.</p> <p>Have your partner carry your cat in a carrier into the main living area of your house and immediately engage your new cat with a toy.</p> <p>At the end of the play session, return your new cat to the safe room.</p> <p>Gradually increase the amount of supervised time your two cats have with each other.</p>

POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT

Starting with the scent swap, you can increase the likelihood of success of each step by using positive reinforcement. Each time the cats do not show aggression towards the other’s scent, click to reinforce their behavior and reward with a treat.

RE-INTRODUCTIONS

If one of your cats become aggressive with each other after a successful introduction, have the aggressor examined by a vet for health issues. If the cat receives a clean bill of health, evaluate if there have been recent changes which might have caused stress to your cat.



Disclaimer: This checklist is intended to serve only as a starting point. A cat with inappropriate behavior should always see a vet for a health check. If your cat receives a clean bill of health, please consider contacting a cat behavior consultant. Many behavior modification techniques have detrimental effects if misapplied. A qualified professional will take a complete behavior history, develop an intervention plan customized for your cat, and guide you through its implementation.

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