



INTRODUCING A NEW CAT

The first step in creating harmony between your new cat and the existing cats in your household is to pick the best possible new cat for your household and lifestyle. All cats are individuals, and some may merge into your household better than others.

REDUCING THE LIKELIHOOD OF PROBLEMS

- Before bringing your new cat home, create a separate “territory” for her. This area should be equipped with food, water, a scratching post, a litter box, access to natural sunlight, and comfortable resting places.
- Your other cats should have their own separate territory. Make certain that both areas (the space for the new cat and the space for the other cats) contain multiple hiding places so the cats can easily retreat if necessary.
- Place your new cat in her space as soon as she arrives home, and spend a minimum of one hour with her (and the other cats in the household) per day. Play with them regularly and watch them closely for signs of stress or anxiety, such as hiding, aggressive behavior, decreased appetite, and/or excessive vocalization.
- If any cat is showing mild signs of stress, give him or her time to acclimate to the new situation.

CAT PHEROMONES

- Here’s another way to introduce cats to each other’s scent: Cats have glands in their cheeks that produce pheromones. Exposing each cat to towels that were gently rubbed on the new cat’s cheeks may be a good way to introduce them.
- Next, you can start allowing the cats closer access to each other by placing them on either side of a closed door so that they can smell each other directly. The next step is to allow them to see each other through a baby gate or a door that is propped open two inches. If the cats are interested in each other and seem comfortable, allow them to meet. Open the door to the rooms between the cats and observe them closely.
- If any cat shows signs of significant stress or aggression, separate them again and introduce them more slowly. Once the cats have acclimated to being allowed to sniff each other through a door, bring each cat into a large room, on opposite sides.
- Over multiple sessions, gradually bring the cats closer to each other. With time, the cats will learn that they are not a serious threat to each other.

CREATING A HAPPY HOME

- Remember, an anxious cat is much more likely to behave aggressively than a cat who is comfortable and relaxed. If you use patience in the initial stages of the introduction process, you will probably increase your chances of a harmonious household.

The above recommendations are guidelines to increase the likelihood that your new cat will get along with the existing cat(s) in your household. If you have tried these techniques and your cats are still not getting along, please seek the help of your veterinarian or a behaviorist.