



Introducing your Cat to another Cat

If you're bringing a new cat into your home, be patient. It takes most cats 8 to 12 months to develop a friendship with a new cat. The introduction must be gradual as cats tend to be territorial and although some cats certainly become close friends, others never do. Many cats who don't become buddies learn to avoid each other, but some cats fight when introduced and continue to do so until one of the cats must be rehomed.

Take precaution and watch your cat's attitude toward other cats that may cross their path. You will probably have a more difficult time introducing a new cat into your home if your cat shows aggression towards other cats that cross their path.

Introducing Your Cats

Step 1: Controlling First Impressions

The first impression a new cat makes when she meets your resident cat is critical. It's best to separate the two cats when you first bring home your new cat. If two cats display aggression during their first meeting, this may set the mood for their future relationship. For this reason:

- The two cats should be able to smell and hear—but not see or touch—each other.
- Each cat should have her own food and water bowl, litter box, scratching post, bed, etc.
- Feed the cats near the door that separates them so they learn that coming together (even though they can't see each other) results in a pleasant experience.
- In addition to regular cat food, feed the cats extra-special treats near the door as well, like tiny pieces of tuna, salmon, cheese, chicken or liver.
- After two to three days, switch the cats' locations so they can investigate each other's smell. This also allows the new cat to explore a different section of your home.

Step 2: Letting the Cats See Each Other

If you have not seen signs of aggression at the door (no hissing, no growling) you can introduce the cats to each other. One method is to replace the door with 2 baby gates positioned in the door jam, one above the other. Have one cat on each side of the door, and start the introduction by setting each cat down a few feet away from the screen or gates. When the cats notice each other, say their names and toss treats to them, aiming the treats behind them. Over the next few days, continue to encourage feeding, eating treats and playing near the barrier, gradually offering the cats' meals, treats and toys closer to the screen.



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Step 3: Letting the Cats Spend Time Together

The next stage is to permit the cats to spend time together without a barrier between them. Supervise these initial face-to-face interactions carefully.

- It's good to bring the cats together when they are likely to be relatively calm, such as after a meal or strenuous play.
- Keep a squirt bottle handy in case the cats begin to fight.
- As the cats become more familiar with each other, allow them longer and longer periods of time together.

If you have multiple cats at your home and you are bringing a new comer into the mix, introduce each cat individually. After each of your cats has met the new cat one-on-one, you can start to allow all of the cats to mingle as a group.

Your cats will be more likely to get along if they're happy in their environment. Make sure there are plenty of hiding spots for your cats. Some like to sit up high, on shelves and on kitty condo perches. Frightened cats, on the other hand, tend to hide under and behind things, so make sure you provide spots at floor level as well.