

Introducing a Cat to a New Home

Your first day after moving with your cat should be spent allowing him to get used to his new home. Selecting a room in the new house to be a “home base” for your cat will help them adjust well. Cats are territorial animals and do best if they are introduced to one small part of a new home at a time. Pick a quiet room where your new cat can stay until he has adjusted. Make sure your cat has access to food, water, a litter box and any familiar items that he enjoys, such as its toys or bed, in his home base.

Visit your cat regularly as they adjust to their new space. Everything they encounter will be new and possibly stressful for them, so it is important to allow them to adjust at their own speed. It could take two days for them to get comfortable or it could take months—every cat is different. A good indication that your cat has adjusted to their new home is when they are eating, drinking and using the litter box normally. Your cat should also not show any signs of fear, such as hiding when you walk into its home base. When your cat is comfortable and you feel that they are ready to see the rest of the house, gradually introduce him to each new room.



If there are other pets in the new home, a proper introduction to new animals is very important. Rushing through an introduction could cause long-lasting tension between your cat and the other pets. Here are some tips to help that introduction go as smoothly as possible:

- Introductions can take a few weeks to happen, *take your time*.
- *Swap scents* between the two groups of animals that you are planning to introduce. Put something that smells like your cat in with the other animals, and vice versa.
- Keeping your cat in its home base, feed meals on one side of the door and the other group of animals on the other side. If either set of animals appears to be too stressed to eat, move the bowls further away from the door.
- After a week or two begin short, supervised visits together and increase the length if all is going well. If there is any conflict, remove the animal that did not show any aggression. You do not want the animal to create a negative association to the new animal by being removed from the situation they felt threatened in.
- If you are introducing cats to a dog, be sure to do so safely. Double-check that the dog is wearing a properly fitted collar and leash to easily control the situation if it starts to go sour. Also ensure that the cat has a path to get away safely if it feels threatened, over a baby gate or up high out of reach. Always supervise their interactions until you are certain that it is safe. Dogs are much larger and more powerful animals than cats and may hurt them accidentally or may view a cat as a prey animal.

