



**OPERATION
KINDNESS**

Introducing Cats

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When you are bringing a new cat home, it is important to make sure that your current cat's introduction goes well. Cats have a long memory, and they can be skeptical of new housemates at first. Following these steps will start both of your cats off on the right path to creating a successful relationship.

1. Set up a safe room for your new cat. Make sure that this room is separate from all other pets in the home. Provide your new cat with their own litter box, food, and water dishes, as well as plenty of comfortable places to rest. If your new cat is nervous about being in a new home, as many cats are, provide them with covered beds or other appropriate hiding places. Spend time each day in your cat's safe room, bonding with them through play and affection. Feeding time is a great time to bond with your new cat.
2. Allow your current pets to smell your new cat through the door. Don't discourage your current pets from investigating their new housemate by sniffing at or near the door. You can even swap bedding between your new cat and your existing pets so they can get an up-close smell and allow their scents to combine in and around the household. You can also start to introduce treats to each cat on opposite sides of the door, so they begin to associate yummy treat time with their new housemate or even move their food bowls near the doorway, so they are visiting their new housemate at mealtimes.
3. When your new cat is settled comfortably in their new space, this could take several days or even weeks, allow them to start to explore new parts of the house safely. When you do this, you should make sure that the other pets are put in another room so that they don't accidentally run into each other and have an unwanted altercation. Cats are most active at dawn and dusk, so this is a good time to leave the door open on their safe area and allow them to explore on their own if they choose. Don't force your new kitty to explore but instead let it happen naturally. It may take a while, a few days even before your cat decides that he wants to leave his safe room to venture out into the rest of the house. Always leave the door open to his safe room so he can retreat there as needed. After your cat has had a chance to explore, make sure to return them to their safe area before letting the other animals out.
4. Monitor the interactions between your new pet and your existing pets as they interact through the doorway. If your cats show friendly interest in one another,

you can try to leave your established cats out when you offer free roaming time for your new cat. When you do this, make sure there are plenty of hiding places and escape routes for each cat. The biggest challenge in introducing cats to each other is space. If one cat feels that they cannot navigate their space safely, they may think that their only choice is to flee or fight.

Remember that first impressions go a long way with cats. It is up to you to make sure that things go well for your new cat and your existing cat.

If your cats are having a hard time accepting each other, reach out to our Behavior team or a qualified professional trainer for assistance.

For behavior and training advice, please contact Operation Kindness at behavior@operationkindness.org or visit www.operationkindness.org/training.