



Introducing a New Cat to Resident Cat

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SUCCESSFUL INTRODUCTIONS REQUIRE TIME AND PATIENCE.

Introducing a New Cat to Other Cats

1. Confine the new cat to one medium sized room with its litterbox, food, water, and a bed. Feed the resident cats and the newcomer near either side of the door to this room. Do not put the food so close to the door that seeing each other eat upsets them. This will help to start things out on the right foot by associating something enjoyable (eating!) with each other's presence. Gradually move the dishes closer to the door until the cats can eat calmly directly on either side. Next, use two doorstops to prop open the door just enough to allow the cats to see each other, and repeat the whole process.

2. Switch sleeping blankets between the new cat and resident cats so they have a chance to become accustomed to each other's scent. Also, put the scented blankets underneath the food dishes.

3. Once the new cat is using its litter box and eating regularly while confined, let it have free time in the house while confining the other cats. This switch provides another way for the cats to have experience with each other's scent without a face-to-face meeting, and allows the newcomer to become familiar with its new surroundings without being frightened by other animals.

4. Avoid any interactions between the cats, which result in either fearful or aggressive behavior. If you allow these responses to become a habit, they can be difficult to change. It is better to introduce the animals to each other so gradually that neither cat becomes afraid or aggressive. You can expect mild forms of these behaviors, but do not give them the opportunity to intensify. If either cat becomes fearful or aggressive, separate them, and continue the introduction process in a series of gradual steps, as outlined above.

Precautions: You will need to add another litterbox, and probably clean all the boxes more frequently. Make sure that none of the cats is being "ambushed" by another while trying to use the box.

Try to keep the resident cat's schedule as close as possible to what it was before the newcomer's appearance. Cats can make lots of noise, pull each other's hair, and roll around quite dramatically without injury. If small spats do occur between the cats, you should not attempt to intervene directly to separate the cats. Instead, make a very loud noise, or throw a pillow at or a glass of water on the cats in order to separate them. Give them both a chance to calm down a before reintroducing them to each other. Be sure each cat has a safe hiding place.