

Introducing Your New Kitty To Existing Resident Cats

Here is a very simple, fairly painless method to introduce a new kitty:

- **"Furnish" a room for New Kitty to come home to.** This is where he will spend 3-8 days getting to know YOU and your family. Provide food, water, litter pan, a few toys, a scratching post and a "bed." The bed can be an old comforter, an old sweatshirt or two, or a nice thick towel. Give New Kitty some toys, balls with bells, catnip-filled toys, and furry mice. It's best if New Kitty's room doesn't have places he can hide from you and be unreachable, such as under a bed. You can use a feather toy to try to coax him out from under a bed if putting him in a room with a bed is unavoidable.
- **When you come home with New Kitty, take him to "his room."** Place the carrier near the litter pan. This is a reference point - he needs to know before anything else happens, where the litter pan is located. Open the door to the carrier, and let him come out when he is comfortable. Some come out immediately, tail waving, head up, looking around to explore. Others will slink out and go under something. This is ok - just talk softly to the kitty, put food in the dish, and leave him alone for a little while to listen to the new noises and smell the different smells in your house. Go in several times during the first day. New Kitty may not run up and leap on your lap, so please don't be disappointed. He's very much out of his known territory. So what do you do? Go into New Kitty's room, sit down, watch TV or read a book, and talk to New Kitty. New Kitty may or may not come out. If he does, that's great, and shows he will probably not need the full 8 days in the room.
- **Second and Third day, same routine. Go in before leaving for work, give fresh food & water, scoop the litter pan.** New Kitty should now have nibbled and used the pan. Some will wait about 24 hours; others have no qualms at all. When you arrive home from work, go visit New Kitty. Get down on the floor and entice him to play. On each trip to visit the kitty, notice if the balls or any other toys have been moved, or anything else in the room. If things have been disturbed, that means he has been exploring. We cannot emphasize enough how much patience may be needed during the first couple weeks with a New Kitty. An older adult may require much more time and patience.
- **Fourth day: Pick up New Kitty and open the door. Allow the Existing Resident Cat (ERC) to come in, while you go out and close the door.** Allow about an hour or so for the ERC to sniff and investigate where New Kitty has been. During this time, take New Kitty to where the ERC's litter box is (again, a reference point) - and allow New Kitty to explore at his own pace from there. Then, exchange New Kitty and ERC again, taking New Kitty back to "his" room, ERC back into "his" house. Do this 1-2 more days. New Kitty should become increasingly comfortable, and this is the best way to prevent the ERC from taking great offense that another creature has moved in.
- **On the 6th or later day: When you arrive home, go in and spend a little time playing with New Kitty. When you exit the room, leave the door open.** For a few more days, leave New Kitty's litter pan and dishes in the room, then remove them. New Kitty should be using pans in both locations, and should not mind the removal of "his".

The benefits of introducing a new kitty in this manner:

- 1) - **New Kitty gets used to new sounds, smells and people in a confined area, and this area is likely to be a comfort zone;** if for some odd reason later on in life, he gets frightened by something or must be confined, the original room will be his "haven."
- 2) - **It allows observation for both you and New Kitty.** You can see what New Kitty likes in regards to toys, petting, and grooming, plus it gives you a chance to see how much he's eating and using the litter pan the first week and to generally observe his behavior. New Kitty is given a chance to get to know and bond with you, without interference from the ERC. Take your time, allow New Kitty to progress at his own pace. It's well worth it!