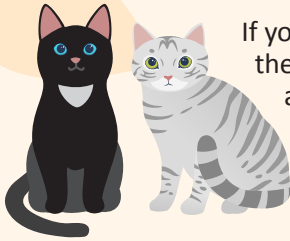


Meet & Greet 101

Introducing a New Cat to Your Pets at Home

Adopting a new cat is an incredible experience that comes with great responsibility. Remember that cats can be territorial – they may not take to newcomers right away. It may take several weeks or even months for your pets to adjust and take in the new life at home. To help ease your new cat into their new life, the following steps are recommended to make the transition easier on everyone in your household.

Multiple Cats



If you have more than one resident cat at your house, it is best to introduce them one at a time to the new addition. Pet introductions should be made after introductions to the people in the house. Introductions can take a few days or up to a few weeks depending on the personalities. Do not rush the introduction period.

One-on-One Cat Introduction

1. Personal Space

Create a personal space for your new cat with his or her own litter box, food and water bowls, toys, and cat scratcher. The space should be in a separate room from other pets' items and with a door that can be closed. Put your new cat inside the room with the door closed to allow the cat to adjust to its new surroundings without the resident cat in the room. The interaction between the two cats should be limited to under the door sniffing and paw playing.

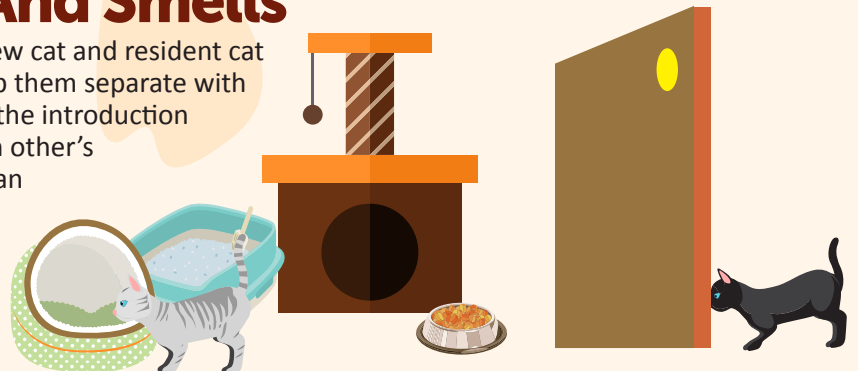
2. Under the Door Introductions

With both cats on either side of the closed door, feed them each a special treat. Treats help cats associate positive experiences when the other is near. Providing new toys and promoting under the door paw playing are other ways to promote positive experiences. If there is any hissing or growling, be patient and continue giving treats by the closed door, and even feed both cats on either side of the door.



3. Trading Spaces – And Smells

Have the cats trade spaces and allow both the new cat and resident cat to explore each other's individual areas. Still keep them separate with the door closed. Do this a few times throughout the introduction period for about an hour each time. Sniffing each other's smells helps them acclimate to each other. You can also use the same grooming brush on each cat and swap blankets/cat beds as well.



4. Face-to-Face

So far so good? Is everyone acting, eating, and using the litter box normally in their own area? Great! The next step is to open the door between the two but keep a gate, like a baby gate, across the opening. This allows both cats to see, smell, and have contact with each other. Initial hissing is likely, but it should stop over time.



5. All Together Now

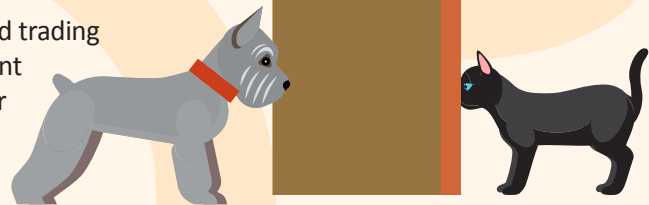
If both cats seem happy and are eating and using the litter box, remove the gate. The cats will begin to interact. Watch for increasing aggression, swatting, hissing and/or fighting. If that happens, separate the cats and refer to the additional information section of this guide. Still keep separate areas for each cat as they interact over time. If they continue to eat and use the litter box normally in their separate areas, you can gradually move food bowls closer until next to each other. A separate litterbox for each cat is recommended for continued success.



Meet the Dog

1. Initial Introduction

Follow the personal space, under the door introductions, and trading spaces steps from the cat introductions but with your resident dog and new cat. Make sure you praise appropriate behavior of both the resident dog and new cat throughout the introductions.



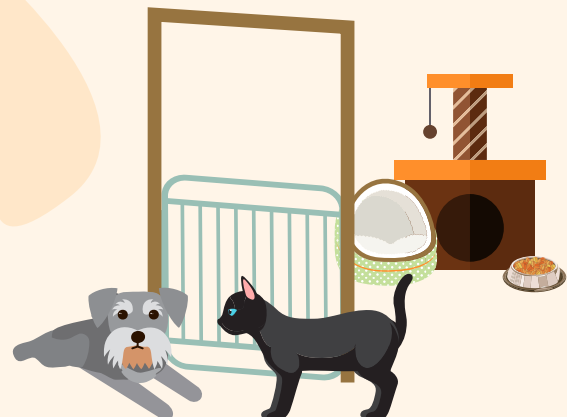
2. Face-to-Face with Leash On

Leash the resident dog and allow for face-to-face introduction with the new cat in a neutral area. If either pet is very fearful or aggressive, separate and refer to the additional information section of this guide. Give plenty of praise and treats to the dog for appropriate behavior and allow both to smell each other. If the interaction is positive, repeat this step several times to build up positive experiences. Remember to keep the resident dog and new cat separated in between the interactions with the door closed to the new cat's personal space



3. Escape Route

After several positive face-to-face interactions with the resident dog, the next step is to open the door between the two but keep a gate, like a baby gate, across the opening. This allows for off-leash interaction, but gives the cat an escape if the attention is not wanted. Allow the off-leash dog to meet the cat and carefully observe the interaction. Intense staring, raised hackles, and straining towards the cat ("focusing") are behaviors that you should interrupt. If all goes well, the dog and cat can interact under supervision. The gate should be a permanent feature even after positive experiences.



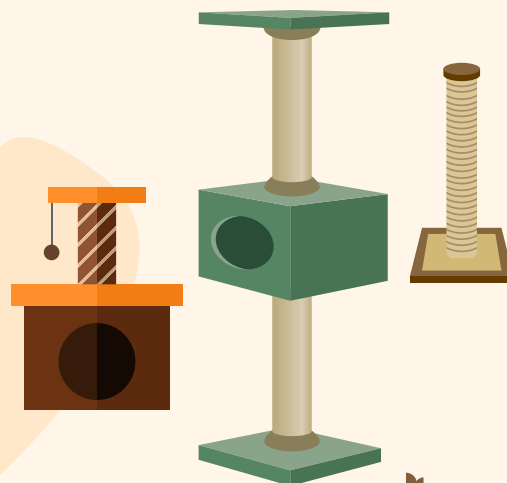
After the Introduction

Cats and Scratching

Scratching is a normal and necessary cat behavior which should be encouraged – on acceptable objects. Recommended scratchers are made of cardboard or sisal rope that should be sturdy and placed in areas that are easily accessible. Refer to the additional information section of this guide for more details. Remember to trim your cat's nail on a regular basis. Declawing your cat is not an acceptable method to control the natural scratching behavior.

Cats need to scratch to:

- stretch their bodies and flex their feet and claws
- mark territory
- remove the dead, outer layer of their claws
- work off energy



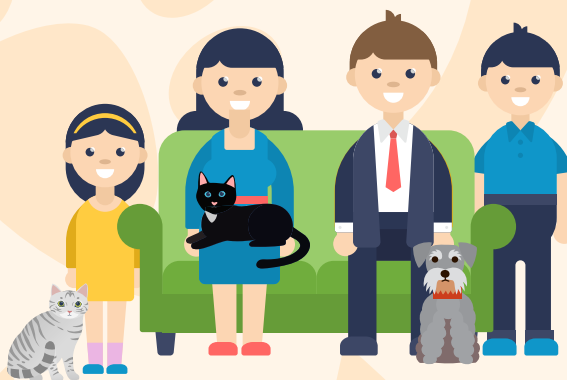
New Cat with Children

As a reminder, children should never be left alone unsupervised with your pet. Teach your children to interact with your pet in a respectful manner.



The End Goal

Remember that it can take several months for a cat to feel at home. There is no specific timeframe for success; it all depends on personalities. The slower the better, as first impressions are important for cats. Be patient.



When Time and Patience Don't Seem to Work.... Recommended Additional Information for New Cats in the Home

[ASPCA.org/pet-care/cat-care](https://www.aspcare.org/pet-care/cat-care)

[Pets.webmd.com/cats/guide/cat-nail-clipping-care](https://pets.webmd.com/cats/guide/cat-nail-clipping-care)

[jacksongalaxy.com](https://www.jacksongalaxy.com)

