



How to Introduce New Cat to Resident Cat

Phase 1 – Cat Smells Cat

- **Successful introductions take time.** DO NOT and we repeat DO NOT try to introduce the new addition to your resident cat(s) immediately upon arrival. You may damage the new relationship irreparably and initiate fear, anger, aggression, spraying and litter box problems in the new cat and/or resident cat(s). Successful introductions take time.
- **Let the cats sniff out the situation.** Let “smell” be the first introduction as the cats sniff each other from under the “safe room” door. Within two to four days, begin exchanging the bedding between the new and resident cat(s) daily. This helps familiarize the cats with each other’s scents.

Phase 2 – Cat Continues to Smell Cat

- **Let the sniffing continue.** If there are no marked signs of aggression from the cats, such as hissing and growling, the next step is to confine your resident cat to a room and let the new cat explore your house for a couple of hours each day for several days.

Phase 3 – Cat Sees Cat

- **Organize a carrier meeting.** Place your new cat in a carrier and put the carrier in a location of your home outside of the safe room (for example, the living room). Allow the cats to look at each other and sniff through the carrier door.
- **Any signs of aggression?** Keep the visit short and return the new cat to its safe room.
- **Repeat** this phase 2 to 3 times daily (if possible), until cats appear to be more comfortable with each other.

Phase 4 – Cat Meets Cat

- **Let the cats meet at their own pace.** If there are no signs of aggression between cats, leave the door to the safe room open a crack. This will allow the new cat to explore and/or your resident cat to visit. Supervision is necessary for the safety of both cats.
- **In case of aggression,** have a spray bottle filled with water or a towel handy. Always stop serious threats and/or aggression immediately, as a serious fight may damage the potential for successful integration and relationship.
- **If over a period of weeks your integration plan is not going well,** consider the installation of an inexpensive screen door from a building supply store. The screen door allows the cats to continue to get to know each other by sight and smell, while keeping both parties safe. Each cat can take turns in the screened room.
- **Feliway Spray** may also prove helpful when integration is difficult.

Phase 5 – Integration Complete

- **You may notice some occasional hissing, swatting and grouchy behavior** over the next few months (and years). This is normal. Cats are hierarchical by nature and must establish and affirm the pecking order within your household. Plus, much like humans, all cats have the occasional “off” day.

Please note: The 5 phases detailed above offer only approximate timelines. Some integrations may proceed faster or slower and integration is dependent on the personalities of the cats involved. Remember, you know your cat(s) best. Use common sense and patience when integrating a new cat or cats.

How to Introduce a Shy Cat Companion – The Exception to the Rule

If you’ve adopted a shy cat or kitten to provide companionship for your resident cat, a quicker integration may be best. Shy cats are often used to and welcome other feline companionship. They will be very lonely on their own, so we recommend that the integration take place very quickly (1-3 days) unless there are significant problems.

Many Thanks to the Meow Foundation for this handout

<https://www.meowfoundation.com/resources/new-cat/>