

## INTRODUCING YOUR NEW CAT TO YOUR RESIDENT CAT

Cats can be wonderful companions to each other. However, if you have an older cat that isn't used to being around other cats, it may take them a while to get used to your new furry friend. Younger cats may only need a few days, but an older cat may take weeks or months to get comfortable with a new cat in its house. Cats are territorial animals so the introduction should be taken slowly so they can get used to each other before actually meeting face to face. This prevents aggression and fearful behavior from developing.



**Step 1:** Keep your new cat in a room with their litterbox, food, water, and a bed. Have your cats eat on opposite sides of the door to this room. This will establish a positive association with each other's smells. Don't put the food so close to the door that the cats get too upset to eat. Gradually move the bowls closer to the door until they can both eat calmly.

**Step 2:** As long as neither cat is sick, you can switch blankets or beds between your cats so they can get used to each other's scent. You can also rub a towel on one cat and put it underneath the food bowl of the other. This step should be done with all cats in the home.

**Step 3:** Once your new cat is becoming comfortable in their safe room, let them explore the rest of the house while putting your resident cat in the new cat's room. This also allows them to experience the other cat's scent without meeting face to face.

**Step 4:** Have the cats meet in short, supervised sessions, increasing the time together based off their behavior. Try to avoid any aggression or fearful behavior. If these are allowed to become a habit, they'll be hard to change. If a cat is showing these behaviors, separate them again and start over with the introduction process to get them more used to one another. If your cats do have a small spat, don't try to separate them with your body. Try making a loud noise or throw a blanket over them. Allow them to calm down before going back to the introduction steps. Don't punish them, either. It can make things worse. If you continue to have problems, you can consult a professional to ensure the safety of your pets.