

Introducing Your New Cat to Your Resident Cat

It is important to have **realistic expectations** when introducing any new pet to a resident pet. Some cats are more social than other cats. Cats are territorial and need to be introduced to other animals very slowly in order to give them time to get use to each other before there is a face-to-face confrontation. Slow introductions help prevent fearful and aggressive problems from developing.

Before Face to Face

- **Confinement.** Confine your new cat to one room with his necessary supplies. Feed your resident cat and the newcomer on each side of the door to this room. This will help all of them to associate something enjoyable (eating) with the other's smells. Gradually move the dishes closer to the door until your cats can eat calmly, directly on either side of the door.
- **Scent Swapping.** Switch sleeping blankets or beds between your new cat and your resident cat so they have a chance to become accustomed to one another's scents. Rub a towel on one cat (from head to toe) and put it underneath the food dish of the another cat. You should do this with each cat in the house.
- **Switching Living Areas.** Once your new cat is using the litter box and eating regularly while confined, let him have free time in the house. **Confine your other cat(s)** to the new cat's room. This switch provides another way for the cat(s) to experience each other's scents without a face-to-face meeting. It also allows the newcomer to become familiar with her new surrounds without being frightened by the other animals.

Contact Stage

- **Avoid Fearful or Aggressive Meetings.** If these behaviors are to continue, it will be difficult to repair the new relationship. It is better to introduce your cats to each other gradually so that neither animal becomes afraid or aggressive. Expect mild forms of these behaviors, but do not give them the opportunity to intensify. If either animal becomes fearful or aggressive, separate them, and start over with the introduction process.
- **Avoid Punishments.** When introductions do not go perfectly, **never result to physical punishments.** Instead, praise them for what they are doing right or separate them and try again later.
- **Always Supervise.** Make sure your new cat has escape routes for when she gets overwhelmed, high perches or the counter, while the resident cat is closely monitored.

It is important to take this process slowly and not to rush into things. This process will be the foundation for your pet's lifelong relationship.